

Hafa Adai!

MHS team wins Congressional App Challenge. **PAGE 2**

Regulations for commercial pot industry in the pipeline. **PAGE 3**

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Up to \$1,000 reward for info on double homicide

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The NMI Crime Stoppers Program is offering up to \$1,000 cash reward to anyone who can provide information that will lead to the arrest

of the killer/s of the two women at a restaurant in San Antonio last Friday.

As this developed, Attorney General Edward Manibusan stated yesterday that their office is still looking into the matter as to who will conduct

» **Autopsy has yet to be done on victims**

the autopsy on the victims. The CNMI used to tap the services of former Guam chief medical examiner Aurelio Espinola, who is already retired.

The Department of Public Safety said it is the Office of the Attorney General that has been coordinating
See REWARD on Page 4

\$120 million for Medicaid, 3,000 more workers OK'd

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The U.S. House of Representatives approved yesterday two massive spending bills for fiscal year 2020 that included \$120 million for Marianas Medicaid over the next two years, making 3,000 more foreign worker permits available.
See MEDICAID on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

■ **Torres praises bill passage to boost Medicaid funding for NMI to \$120M. **PAGE 2****



LIFTOFF!

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket takes off from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida last Dec. 16 in a dazzling display of light and smoke. A satellite that is intended to provide broadband service to underserved communities in the Pacific was atop the rocket. It was placed into its target geostationary transfer orbit 33 minutes following initial ignition.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Story on Page 5

Over 600 teachers to get \$2K incentive pay

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

Over 600 teachers are set to receive \$2,000 each in incentive pay before Christmas after the Board of Education unanimously approved yesterday the motion to adopt the Retention Incentive Program.

During the board meeting yesterday, four out of five board members voted yes to approve the motion to release the \$1.3 million in bonus pay for PSS teachers, counselors, librarians,
See TEACHERS on Page 4

Aggreko to supply power for \$1.5M

» **Temporary power supply while CUC fixes power engines**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. completed last Thursday the signing of a \$1.5-million 90-day contract for a temporary electric power supply with Aggreko while CUC's generator engines are down for overhaul and repair.

CUC put out a competitive advertisement for the emergency power supply and a CUC committee—which included a lawyer from the

See AGGREKO on Page 4



Camacho

INSIDE



LOCAL

The indigenous canoe *Che'lu*, which arrived on Saipan last Dec. 15, is here to stay.

PAGE 7



BUSINESS

Oteph's BBQ opened shop in Chalan Kanoa last Dec. 4 just in time for the holidays.

PAGE 16



WORLD

Pope Francis abolished the use of the Vatican's highest level of secrecy in clergy sexual abuse cases.

PAGE 19



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Local

MHS team wins Congressional App Challenge

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Julia Malate, Nan Xie, and Grace Zhang of Marianas High School are the winners of the fourth annual Northern Mariana Islands Congressional App Challenge.

The Marianas High School students scored the top rank over 16 other submissions from schools in the Northern Marianas.

"This year's competition received the largest number of submissions since the Northern Marianas App Challenge began in 2014," said Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (IND-IP). "Every submission we received showed the students' dedication to learning how to code, and how to express their ideas through tech."

Judges for this year's app challenge were three computer science professionals: Hansel Lynn, CEO of theCoderSchool in Palo Alto, California; Bradley Hontz, computer science educator at Girl Scouts of Orange County; and Ti-Fen Pan, software engineer at San Francisco-based company, Kiddom. Judges were recommended by the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Julia Malate, Nan Xie, and Grace Zhang of Marianas High School are the winners of the fourth annual Northern Mariana Islands Congressional App Challenge.

national coordinators of the App Challenge.

Malate, Xie, and Zhang's app is called "SPA (Summer Program Application)," a mo-

bile app with the purpose of helping high school students learn and research pre-college summer programs in the United States with ease and

convenience.

As the Northern Marianas' winning team, the team will receive national recognition and have their work eligible for display at the U.S. Capitol. They will also be invited to attend the House of Code reception in Washington, D.C., happening next spring, where they will have the opportunity to meet fellow coders nationwide and be honored for their work.

This year's honorable mentions are both from Mount Carmel School. Coming in second place is "Saipan Spots," a map app with lists and markers of key locations on Saipan, by Vincent Reyes. Third place is "Saipan Health and Nutrition," an informational health app that incorporates a water intake tracker, by Danielle Jaden Yamagata-Santos and Kalea Borja.

The Congressional App

Challenge is an annual competition open to middle school and high school students to encourage and inspire students to actively be involved in STEM (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) learning and innovation. Apps can be submitted for any platform, such as Web browsers, smartphones, computers, or tablets. Next year's app challenge will commence in late summer 2020. (PR)

Torres praises bill's passage to boost Medicaid funding for NMI to \$120M

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres joined the other U.S. territorial governors Wednesday in thanking the U.S. House of Representatives for passing a bipartisan bill that would increase Medicaid funding to the CNMI to \$120 million until 2021.

The bill also increases the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for the CNMI to 83%, creating a more favorable federal cost share that addresses our healthcare challenges as an island territory.

"This is welcoming news for many of our residents and our health care providers. Our Medicaid residents will continue to receive the care they need, while ensuring that our entire community of health care providers

can provide services for them again instead of just through [the Commonwealth Health Center] due to our Medicaid shortfall," said Torres.

"The territorial governors and I wrote letters and spoke to members of Congress and other stakeholders to ensure that the territories are included [in the] Medicaid spending bill, and we are very thankful our efforts paid off," he added.

In April 2019, Torres initiated formal talks with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Medicaid issues facing the territories. In May 2019, he supported the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. and the CNMI Medicaid Office's testimonies in front of Congress to advocate

for Medicaid parity in the territories. Since he took office, Torres has initiated several discussions with federal partners on lifting the Medicaid cap, increasing the FMAP percentage, and increasing funding for Medicaid in the CNMI and in the territories.

"This was important work that we have prioritized for a long time, and I thank our partners in the U.S. Congress, my fellow territorial governors, CHCC CEO Esther Muna and her staff, and Ms. Helen Sablan and our CNMI Medicaid Office staff for their partnership. I look forward to working with CHCC and our private healthcare providers on expanding Medicaid services once again with the new funding," said Torres. (PR)

Scheduled power interruption today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be a scheduled power interruption today, Dec. 19, 2019, from 8:30am to 11:30am in Koblerville.

The sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 2 distribution circuit will affect Koblerville (portions of Adobu Dr.,

Asnentukon St., and Sentada Ct.). No water wells or wastewater lift stations will be affected.

The purpose of the emergency power interruption is to de-energize utility lines and allow power line workers from CUC the ability to conduct systems maintenance on the

power distribution circuit by putting Kiya 2 load to its original position.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation>). (PR)



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Regulations for commercial pot industry in the pipeline

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Regulations for the commercial marijuana industry in the CNMI is now in the pipeline to get it ready for review by the Office of the Attorney General, as what has been done with the homegrown registry program regulations.

"We have three different sections of the law that we are trying push out: homegrown, commercial, and medicinal," said Commonwealth Cannabis Commission chair Nadine Deleon Guerrero.

She said the commission recently received the comments of the Office of the Attorney General on the final draft of the registry regulations for the homegrown aspect of the CNMI marijuana industry and the commission would soon be talking about it.

The homegrown rules would allow the public to be able to grow cannabis at home, within the confines of the law, but with the premise that once the commission rolls out the homegrown registry program, "home growers" would have to come in and register and have a card with them.

"The registry is like an application format of you coming in and applying to be able to grow at home, because you cannot just grow it. You

have to be [registered]," Deleon Guerrero added. "If you're caught growing and you don't have a registry card after the commission rolls out the program, you stand to be fined and risk the possibility of not having a license to grow ever again."

As the commission gets ready to polish the homegrown registry regulations, the discussion during yesterday's commission meeting focused on the "commercial" regulations.

Deleon Guerrero said the commission has made a lot of progress, and is set to put together the rules and regulations related to the commercial aspect of the marijuana industry in the CNMI, for submission to the Office of the Attorney General for review.

Once reviewed and checked if the regulations are all in line with the law, the commission will start rolling it out to spark the ability for people to start investing in the industry.

"Anyone who wants to sell marijuana, anyone who wants to have a lounge, anyone who wants to have a dispensary [will be] allowed to come in and apply for that license," Deleon Guerrero said.

"There's a lot to it because there are different licenses—wholesale, producer license, processing, micro-producers, lounges, and then there's dif-

ferent classes within the lounge. So all of those are things that we need to take into consideration when rolling it out because we want to make sure that we have a structure of a way to accept applications and review it."

The commission also wants to make sure that the guidelines on how they would accept the licenses are in place, and whether or not there would be limitations on the issuances of the licenses.

As for regulations for medicinal marijuana, Deleon Guerrero said they will soon be consulting several stake-



Commissioner Matt Deleon Guerrero explains consumptive taxation to colleagues as they discuss regulations for the commercial aspect of the marijuana industry at the Commonwealth Cannabis Commission meeting yesterday in Gualo Rai.

IVA MAURIN

holders, including the Commonwealth Health Center, Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health, and Department of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

IPI accuses USA Fanter of lying and inflating its fees

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is accusing one of its former contractors, USA Fanter, of lying about the work it did for the casino operator on the Garapan project and for overcharging IPI of millions of dollars.

According to a statement IPI released yesterday, it said that Imperial Pacific recently carried out a phased project reconciliation for USA Fanter's work.

"It was identified that USA Fanter used false reports, forged project quantity numbers, increased units of materials used and prices, and double accrued charges, etc.

"The company forged a payment of \$ 2.7 million and the actual work is around \$450,000. Due to the alarming gap in the final accounts of this audit, a reexamination on a previous settlement of \$6 million has been conducted. It was found that there are also huge gaps in settlement.

"IPI has hired a third-party professional company to review our findings. Results will come in the near future," the IPI statement said.

According to the statement, it said it found out that US Fanter "lied about actual con-

struction works," claiming payment of \$1.5 million when the real amount is only \$455,094, and that USA Fanter reported three times the work done, claiming payment for 42% of construction but actually only completing 7.24% of work.

"According to the rate on Saipan the actual amount will be even lower than around \$300,000," the IPI statement added.

IPI also accused USA Fanter of charging above market unit price. "For instance, 1 square meter formwork price from USA Fanter was \$138.4, and 1 square meter recycle formwork local price is \$3.25. One ton of rebar price from USA Fanter was \$2,280, and local price is \$1,200 per ton.

IPI said it also consulted a professional quantity survey company, Blue Stone Management, as a third party in verifying guidelines. They were hired to review numbers against quantities provided on existing SOV (Schedule of Value) by USA Fanter.

The IPI statement did not provide details on what the company intends to do next. (Saipan Tribune)



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SYP gives away toys to over 400 children

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Saipan Young Professionals, in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, gave over 400 toys to the

Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Saipan hospital to be distributed to less-privileged children this holiday season.

SYP administrator and coordinator Mercilynn Palec said the bureau gave them a list of over 400 children they

felt would greatly appreciate gifts this Christmas season.

"Today we donated roughly around 400 toys and that's according to the list that MCHB provided. [MCHB] provided us with the gender and the ages of these children. No names were revealed to keep everything confidential," she said.

Palec said this is the third year that

SYP and the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves have worked together in their Toy for Tots campaign to provide toys for the MCHB who, in turn, give it to the children that they serve.

"This is the third year that the Saipan Young Professionals have provided these gifts for the clients of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. We reach out to organizations like MCHB that have a clientele of children in need, or are at a disadvantage, or children from low income families," she said.

Palec said MCHB is the first partner agency they have distributed to. They will also have distributions for the Salvation Army, Division of Youth Services,

and Karidat before Christmas.

On behalf of MCHB, Public Health director Margartte Aldan said she would like to express her deepest appreciation for the donation.

"We really want to thank them for the support that they give us so that we can brighten up our children's lives in the community. We've gone through so much and this is really a big help for them," she said.

The Toys for Tots campaign and distribution is an annual event that was adopted by the Saipan Young Professionals in 2017 in partnership with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves with the goal of meeting the emotional needs of children during the holidays.

REWARD

From Page 1

the process to get a medical examiner for the autopsy.

A source said a medical examiner from Hawaii will likely be hired. Espinola used to handle autopsies in the CNMI for many decades.

Police officer Fred Sato, the coordinator of the CNMI Crime Stoppers program, said yesterday that they are seeking public's assistance for any tips that will help police solve the case.

Anyone who has information and wants to remain anonymous can just

call the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272.

Sato explained that the amount of reward is based on the reliability of the tip provided to Crime Stoppers.

He said it is during his meetings with Crime Stoppers board members that they will discuss the amount of award to be given to a tipster that provides reliable information.

Li Na Lim, 43, and Linhua Cui, 53, were found dead inside the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant Friday morning after they were reportedly shot by still unidentified person/s.

A source said robbery was the likely motive behind the killing. Police

could not find the victims' shoulder bags at the crime scene.

Saipan Tribune learned that Lim used to work as a tour guide with Expo Tour, then she moved to another tour agency.

A year ago, Lim put up a company that took over the operation of Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant as the previous owner had moved back to South Korea.

Cui was among the pioneer garment factory workers on Saipan. She worked for a long time as a baker at Paris Croissant in western Garapan. Cui helped Lim in running the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant.

AGGREKO

From Page 1

Office of the Attorney General—selected Aggreko as the winning bidder for the project, according to CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho yesterday.

He said the contract had been routed and signed and CUC's technical staff are now working with Aggreko to prepare for the power equipment to arrive. Those power generators will be positioned adjacent to CUC's Power Plant 1 in Lower Base in order to connect them to CUC's fuel supply.

Camacho said the contract is for \$1,516,320. He said the people they have been dealing with are Aggreko representatives from Singapore.

He said the temporary generators are supposed to generate 12 megawatts to meet the island's power demand, but Aggreko will be bringing in equipment to generate approximately 15 megawatts so that there will be a power reserve on standby.

Under the contract, Aggreko is expected to start producing power by Jan. 15, 2019.

"It's just to get us by while we overhaul [our] engines," he said. "We want to make sure that we try not to impact our community...in trying to have that reserve capacity when we shut down our engines."

He said the overhaul on CUC's engines are different this time due to the impacts of Super Typhoon Yutu that hit Saipan and Tinian in October 2018. That has resulted in limited revenue for CUC, especially in the first quarter and even in the second quarter of the year.

Camacho said they have received some funding that allows them to sustain their operation throughout the remainder of the current fiscal year. However, it's been extremely challenging due to the lack of payment from some of the large outstanding accounts, he said. He said this lack of payments from large accounts has impacted CUC's ability to perform overhauls.

Camacho said they had to work closely with the CUC board in releasing some of the amount in a restricted account that was earmarked to buy a new engine to replace Engine No. 8.

"We have to deal with the existing engines today and ensure that they're

overhauled and prepared to continue until such time [when] we acquire new engines," he said.

Camacho said the ongoing repair of Engine No. 6 is expected to be finished next week.

"However, with (Engine No. 6) coming online, we have still No. 5 down," said Camacho, adding that they have been bidding out engine overhaul for No. 5.

He said No. 5 will go down first and then No. 7. "Hopefully, we can come out sometime over the course of the next five, six months with the engine overhauls," he said.

Camacho said they will then try to do the internal overhaul on the smaller engines. "These large engines—the 11 megawatt units—are very difficult to take offline without greatly impacting our reserve capacity," he said.

Last month, CUC board authorized the release of \$6 million from CUC's \$12 million that is in a restricted account for the emergency repair and overhaul of power engines at Power Plant 1 and to pay for a temporary electric power supply that will be used while the engines are down for repair and overhaul.

before the end of the year from the Department of Education to specify who are really entitled under educators," Orsini said.

Ada said that he will work on getting clarification from USDOE and including teacher aides in the incentive program because he strongly believes that teacher aides are educators too.

"First, we're going to inquire from the USDOE and then we're going make our arguments that teacher aides are included as educators and I'm really confident that they will agree with us," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, PSS federal programs officer Tim Thornburgh discovered the Retention Incentive Program under Project Restart, a federal program that awards grants that can be used for school operations, recruitment of teachers, renewal of teachers, rewards, and performance incentives for teachers.

release of the bonuses.

"I will ask them first if it's doable and if we can do this expediently before Friday. If they say no, then we're going to [come up with] a plan on how to do it," he said.

At the meeting, Mendiola-Long and Orsini brought up their concerns whether teacher aides are considered educators by the U.S. Department of Education, which administers the funds for the incentive program, because a provision in the program states that educators are eligible for the incentive.

Both Mendiola-Long and Orsini argued that teacher aides should be included in the incentive program because, by BOE definition, they are educators since they devote their time to educating students, specifically special needs children, just like instructors and teachers, just without the qualifications like bachelor's and associate degrees.

"We're going to get clarification

MEDICAID

From Page 1

able for disaster recovery over the next three years, and increasing this year's funding for education, transportation, and energy development among other benefits for the Marianas.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) spent his time on the floor thanking key members of the House who had helped him get Marianas-specific language into the fiscal year 2020 appropriations bills.

Critical for the Marianas is the \$120 million for Medicaid, which averts a funding "cliff" caused by the end of special Obamacare grants to insular areas this year. All of the insular areas received the two-year funding, but the Marianas received the largest percentage increase. Marianas Medicaid for fiscal year 2020 was previously set at just \$6.93 million for the year.

The four smaller insular areas also get an improved federal/local matching rate in yesterday's bill. The federal share of Medicaid, which is now 55%, jumps to 83%, higher than for any of the U.S. states. Puerto Rico's federal share was set at 76% in the spending bill.

The increased Medicaid money does not come without strings. All the insular areas will have to report annually to Congress on how they have spent their new funds and what new benefits have been added for those Medicaid insures. Each of the Pacific insular governments will also have to demonstrate progress toward creating a Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and implementing the statistical information systems that states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands already use.

More workers to speed recovery

Sablan was also able to include in the fiscal year 2020 appropriation his Disaster Recovery Workforce Act, allowing an additional 3,000 foreign workers in the Marianas for reconstruction from last year's typhoons and to prepare for future storms.

The Natural Resources Committee passed H.R. 4479 by unanimous consent on Dec. 5 and that strong show of bipartisan support helped Sablan make the case for including his bill in yesterday's appropriation. The alternative, "regular order," would have required getting time on the House floor for a vote on his bill

and then sending it to the Senate. "Even under the best scenario regular order would have meant waiting for enactment until next year," Sablan said. "The recovery effort needs workers now."

Sablan said that if his Disaster Recovery Workforce Act does pass the Senate and is signed into law, as expected this week, he will immediately ask the U.S. departments of Labor and Homeland Security to quickly put in place the application process for the new workers.

Education funding gets a boost

Education funding got a boost nationwide and for the Marianas. Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I-A funding increased 3% year-over-year. This should put the annual grant for the Marianas over \$12 million.

Title I is the largest grant that the Public School System receives from the U.S. Department of Education. In the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Sablan adjusted the allocation formula, increasing annual funding for PSS by 62%. That change continues to pay dividends.

Also up is funding for the Marianas Head Start program, which should exceed \$4 million in fiscal year 2020. Funding for education of individuals with disabilities increases 3.2% to an estimated \$5.1 million for the Marianas.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant increased 10.4%, which should bring the Marianas funding to over \$5 million. This is more than double what the program was receiving just three years ago.

Energy Action Plans law funded, must be followed

Insular area delegates also won more funding for lowering the costs of electricity and moving to sustainable production sources. Sablan led an effort earlier in the year for the money, which will now go up from \$5 million to \$6.25 million.

Congress intended the grants to the Marianas, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be used to develop energy master plans for each area with detailed engineering and financing steps to lower costs and a timeline for implementation. But the plans have never been put together as required by U.S. Public Law 113-235.

The fiscal 2020 appropriation, however, will now require the funds to be used strictly in accordance with the law. **(PR)**

TEACHERS

From Page 1

instructors, principals, and vice principals under the Retention Incentive Program.

BOE member Marylou Ada was not present to give her vote, but BOE chair Janice Tenorio, BOE vice chair Herman Atalig, BOE member Andrew Orsini, and BOE Tinian representative Phillip Mendiola-Long were present.

The approval would kickstart the process of releasing the first installment of checks worth \$1,000 to over 600 teachers, principals, vice principals, and certified educators by the end of the week. The next payment of \$1,000 will be at the end of the school year.

According to Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, he was going to meet with the Department of Finance staff yesterday to expedite the

Kacific’s first satellite is successfully launched

A satellite that is intended to provide broadband internet service to large swaths of the Pacific and Southeast Asia was successfully launched into space last Monday aboard a SpaceX rocket in Florida.

Kacific1 was launched successfully into space aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at 7:10pm eastern time last Dec. 16 from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, according to a statement from Kacific Broadband Satellites Group, the company that owns the satellite.

It said that Kacific 1 was placed into its target geostationary transfer orbit 33 minutes following initial ignition. The Boeing-built communications satellite will stream high-speed broadband to 25 nations in South East Asia and the Pacific Islands via 56 high-throughput beams.

“Kacific1 is the newest and most powerful commercial satellite operating in the Asia-Pacific region, placing Kacific in an excellent position to grow alongside these markets,” said Christian Patouraux, Kacific founder and CEO. “Its range of services, from mobile backhaul to broadband internet via VSAT terminals, will provide a catalyst for positive change in the nations it is about to serve. I’m thrilled to start seeing the social and economic impact

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

An arc of lights shows the path of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket as it takes off from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida last Dec. 16. Other photo shows the Kacific1 satellite sitting on top of the rocket. It was placed into its target geostationary transfer orbit 33 minutes following initial ignition.



of Kacific1.”

Kacific1 will cover Indonesia, The Philippines, Timor-Leste and South Asia with 28 spot beams, while the Pacific Islands and New Zealand will be covered with a further 28 beams.

Following a sequence of in-orbit manoeuvres and tests that are expected to take approximately six weeks, Kacific1 is scheduled to begin commercial operations in the first quarter of 2020.

Kacific’s momentous first launch was celebrated in Florida by more than 160 guests from across Asia Pacific representing telecommunication and internet service provider customers, government agencies and regulators, not-for-profit organizations, universities, and Kacific investors, management and staff.

“Celebrating this launch with Kacific’s international supporters has been an incredible and affirming experience. I’m very thankful for the wonderful energy they have brought to this unforgettable moment,” said Patouraux. *(Saipan Tribune, PR)*

Open Enrollment Session

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NMTI takes out \$300K loan to stay afloat

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute acquired a loan from the Torres administration last Friday to stay afloat and keep its doors open for another two months.

In an interview with NMTI

chief executive officer Agnes McPhetres, she said that she met with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last Thursday to talk about possible ways out of their current financial crisis.

"The governor came to see me last Thursday and we met and he said 'I'll give you \$300,000,' which he gave me

last Friday, otherwise we would have had to close the institution," she said.

With the \$300,000, McPhetres said that the institution can continue operations for another two months or about three payrolls.

McPhetres made clear that the \$300,000 is not an allo-

cated funding for the institution but a loan that she'd have to return once the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program funding is disbursed to them.

"...Once we get our CW funding, I have to pay back the \$300,000. It's a loan," she said.

Had Torres not responded in time, over 20 employees would have been let go and over 300 students would have stopped their trades education, McPhetres said.

"I will work with [the Legislature] after the holidays

on how we can expedite that [CW funding] so we will not be in this status anymore. This is not a way to run an institution. I'm hoping that this will not be repeated. I'm hoping that the funding will be expedited so that we don't have to worry about the future because this is now a government entity; it's not like when it was a nonprofit," she said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program funding is NMTI's only financial source for ongoing program operations as they do not receive local appropriations in the annual budget.

In an earlier letter to the administration, McPhetres stated that they have been informed by Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente that she is currently unable to act on CW disbursements as there is no law giving Benavente expenditure authority over the funds.

Benavente has sought legislative intervention to rectify the situation with regard to fund distribution and management but, with the passage of such a legislation demanding time, a need for a more immediate intervention was sought through the governor.



McPhetres

HANMI occupancy at 73% in November

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported a 73.38% average occupancy rate among its 11 member-hotels for November 2019. The figure reflects an 8% decrease for HANMI hotels compared to November 2018.

A total of 54,031 of 73,632 available room nights sold during the month, compared to 33,278 of 55,187 available room night sold in November 2018. Average room rates were \$137.59 compared to \$132.91 last November.

"November 2018 was the first full month that tourism felt the impact of Super Typhoon Yutu, so this November we saw an increase in both the number of available rooms, the number of

rooms sold, and the average room rate," said HANMI chair Gloria Cavanagh. "However, in the hotel industry, above 80% occupancy is considered healthy, so at 73% the industry is still struggling, now due to national economies in some of our source markets, trade wars, and unfavorable exchange rates. We should do everything within our power to maintain our current revenue stream, and that includes renewing the expiring public land lease for two of our largest hotels—Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan and Hyatt Regency Saipan—on reasonable terms and before we lose investors. Failure to do so will only result in more closed and dilapidated government prop-

erties, just like La Fiesta, Mariana Resort, and Mariana Country Club."

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical reports are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Saipan World Resort, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

HANMI was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of The Marianas. HANMI also makes regular charitable donations to support non-profit organizations and tourism-related government projects. (HANMI)

CNMI birdwatchers take part in annual count

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

Fifteen volunteers trooped to the American Memorial Park in Garapan early yesterday morning to join this year's Audubon Christmas Bird Count, which was organized by the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to help celebrate the count's 20th year of being done on Saipan.

The Christmas Bird Count, which involves having volunteers counting the number of birds they see in their assigned locations to determine avian population densities, had the volunteers going to locations such as the Marpi landfill, Suicide Cliff, Kagman, and Coral Ocean Point.

This year's bird count on Saipan was organized by Emilie Kohler and she was joined by four Division of Wildlife employees and fifteen volunteers.

"The Christmas Bird Count started in the 1900s and is a citizen science project," Kohler said. "This means that anyone and everyone is encouraged to participate, especially if you have good bird identifying skills."

According to Kohler, birds that aren't originally from Saipan stay on island for the wintertime and, once it is spring or fall, they start to migrate. In order to see reoccurring or new bird species, the bird



From left, Rhonda DiCostanzo, Lee Roy Sablan, Larry Maurin, and Emilie Kohler.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

count is held between the endings of December or beginning of January.

"This event is...a good opportunity for the community to get together and learn about the birds," according to Kohler. "There has been a database that has been provided since the 1900s, so you can see if there's any troubling trends with the bird populations or if there's good news."

There is still no final tabulation on the birds that were counted on Saipan but Kohler hopes to beat last year's record of bird species recorded on island.

Larry Maurin, who has been participating in the count since 2005, said, "It is a nice tradi-

tion and it's nice to meet birders who are experts or beginners."

Rhonda DiCostanzo, a first-time birder on Saipan, used to do the bird count in the U.S. mainland "but these birds [here] are very different."

"I love to learn new things. The birds are beautiful and I love to identify the local birds. It's just wonderful," she added.

DiCostanzo encourages people who have yet to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count to participate since it is a wonderful way to be outdoors, great way to be active, and to learn about nature.

This year's Annual Christmas Bird Count also happened on Rota and Tinian.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Saipan Morning Run on Fridays

Saipan Morning Run is held every Friday at 8am beginning and ending at Grandvrio Resort Saipan in Garapan. This free 7.6K event is organized by Marianas Visitors Authority and Pacific Development Inc. and is open to visitors and residents. For more information, contact Masanori Takahashi of PDI at masa@pdisaipan.com, 322-8770 or 287-1196. (PR)

CNMI Weightlifting sets meeting

CNMI Weightlifting is inviting all persons interested in the sport of weightlifting to a meeting on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020, starting at 1pm, at the NMPASI conference room in Gualo Rai.

Any individual interested in competing in upcoming competitions must personally come to this meeting.

The agenda will include the 2020 Oceania & Commonwealth Championships in Nauru on April 21-25, 2020; the CNMI Weightlifting Competition on Feb. 1, 2020; and the Anti-Doping Administration & Management System.

In addition to discussing upcoming weightlifting competitions and requirements, issues of training facility and equipment, fundraising, and other issues facing the sport of weightlifting in the Northern Mariana Islands will be addressed.

If you have any questions, contact John Davis at 789-9211 or by email at johnhdavisjr@gmail.com or Jeanne Rayphand at 287-9807 or by email at jeannesq@yahoo.com. (PR)

SSHS half-day this Friday

Saipan Southern High School will have a half-day session this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019. Students will be dismissed at 12:30pm. Christmas break for SSHS will be from Dec. 23, 2019, to Jan. 3, 2020. Classes will resume on Monday, Jan. 6, 2020. (PR)

DMS releases mid-progress reports

Dandan Middle School will distribute the second quarter mid-progress reports to parents and guardians today, Dec. 19, from 4pm to 6pm. Proceed to your child's homeroom. In addition, sign up for an appointment with the content teachers if you have questions on your child's progress report.

The school's Parents Teachers Students Association is hosting the Totot Bash on Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, from 5pm to 9pm. Currently, students, teachers, and parents are selling raffle tickets for the annual bash. We are inviting members of the community for a Family Fun Night with games, booths, and food for all to enjoy! (PR)

UOG to celebrate ROTC alumni

All alumni of the University of Guam's Reserve Officers Training Corps program, as well as their guests and the public, are invited to an alumni dinner event this Friday in support of the Military Science Department at the university. The event will begin promptly at 7pm in the UOG Calvo Field House. Attendees are asked to make a donation of \$50 per attendee over the age of 18.

The event aims to connect current ROTC cadets with former cadets who have had fulfilling careers in the U.S. Army in order to inspire pride in the cadets for what their future holds as commissioned officers.

The donation will cover the dinner with the remainder going to the ROTC Military Science Fund within the University of Guam Endowment Foundation to support the enrichment of the ROTC cadet experience. Donations may be made at <https://give.uog.edu/donate/rotc-military-science-fund/>.

Those interested in attending should RSVP by this Thursday to Tessy Paulino at 735-2543. Attire for the event is island casual or OCPs for current cadets and cadre. (PR)

Military to conduct trainings

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla today, Dec. 19, from 10am to 10 am. Training will be conducted within a 12-nautical mile radius of Farallon de Medinilla. For the duration of the exercise the public, fishermen, and marine tour operators are advised to remain clear of this area and monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 is conducting training at the Dandan training site in Inarajan until today, Dec. 19, from 11am to 11:55am. These types of trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military personnel. Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the training. The public should be advised that routine helicopter training often accompanied with the use of blanks can occur during these trainings. (PR)

Traffic hearings set

All parties with traffic citation(s) scheduled for hearing (arraignment) during the following dates will be held at the stated sites:

■ Today, Dec. 19: Marianas Business Plaza, second floor, Courtroom 212B

■ Thursday, Dec. 26: Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center

For additional information, contact the Office of the Clerk of Court at telephone number 236-9703, 783-8417, or 783-8522. (PR)

House panel mulls requiring motorists to pay for street lights

By IVA MAURIN

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REPORTER

How much would you be willing to pay for street lighting?

To help prevent road accidents, alleviate issues faced by motorists and pedestrians at night, and to promote security in the villages, the House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee deliberated Tuesday on a bill which would establish a Street Light Fund for the payment of the utility and operation of public street lights.

Introduced by Rep. Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan), House Bill 21-47, or the Street Light Fund, if enacted, would create a fund within the Finance Department that will be used to

pay for the utility and operation of public street lights, including publicly funded community centers, basketball courts, and other public athletic facilities.

"This bill is focused on the street lights. To light up the streets on Beach Road and in the villages. Due to the typhoon, there's still a lot of areas that are dark [in] Dandan, Koblerville, especially Precinct 1," Flores said.

The funds will be extracted from a proposed annual fee that would be imposed on any vehicle being registered, to be collected at the same time and in the same manner as the annual license and registration fee.

"Basically, when you register your car, you have to pay for your registration. There is going to be another account separate. You pay for the registration and then [another amount] for the street light bill, in a separate account," Flores explained.

Injured military veterans or veterans who are jobless due to injuries incurred during military service will be exempt from the proposed fee.

While the members of the committee support the intent of the bill, there was a deliberation on the amount that

would be paid by individuals when registering vehicles.

A motion was introduced to ask the fiscal analyst to calculate the actual value and the cost of replacement, and the actual cost of utilities for the street lights, and to factor in as well the use of surplus power

that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. generates, including the use of the Department of Public Works Highway commodities.

The fiscal analyst was also directed to present to the committee a fee that can be added to motor registrations.

'Che'lu is here to stay'

By MARK RABAGO

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The indigenous canoe called *Che'lu*, which arrived on Saipan with much fanfare last Dec. 15, is here to stay, according to 500 Sails executive director Pete Perez.

"We will put *Che'lu* where the canoe can best move the revival of our maritime traditions forward. For now, that is Saipan and I suspect *Che'lu* will be here for many years. *Che'lu* is here to unite us and to help us learn how to be mariners again. This will take many years, probably generations. But we are getting there, and the addition of *Che'lu* to our growing fleet is a very big step," he said.

The traditional 47-foot Chamorro outrigger canoe is a collaboration between the Sakman Chamorro organization of Saipan and the *Che'lu* organization of San Diego.

Prior to arriving on Saipan, the *Che'lu* made Guam her home since the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture where the canoe represented both Guam and the Chamorro Diaspora that built her.

"In Guam her main purpose was to teach the local people about the Chamorro maritime heritage that was lost for so many years due to the Spanish colonization of the Marianas and to inspire people to join the revival of canoe culture that is happening today. Now we want to take *Che'lu* to the next level as a voyaging canoe between our islands and other islands in the Pacific," said Perez.

500 Sails has programs that teach swimming and sailing and the non-profit will expand those programs to include Tinian, Rota, and Guam.

"We have trained sailors



This girl joined the welcome ceremony for the *Che'lu* during her arrival in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe last Dec. 15.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

and more are being trained. We have a boatyard where we are building more canoes and where we can take *Che'lu* for maintenance and repairs. Because of these programs and facilities, Saipan is an ideal place to develop voyaging crews and it is our intention that every island have trained crew ready for *Che'lu* when she travels north and south between our islands," added Perez.

With the addition of the *Che'lu*, 500 Sails now boasts five traditional canoes on its fleet. She joins the *Ladahao*, a 40-foot fiberglass voyaging canoe that is currently under repair and a trio of 26-foot canoes—the *Nene*, the *Richard Seman*, and the *Anaguan*.

Currently under construction are the 40-foot fiberglass voyaging canoe *iMarianas* and another 26-footer, the *Jacoba*.

Overstaying tourist allegedly paid \$1,500 to get sham driver's license

Another alleged overstaying tourist who was reportedly able to obtain a CNMI driver's license through fraud was arrested last Thursday.

Guangjian Deng, a Chinese national, was arrested on a charge of producing a fraudulently obtained identification document to law enforcement personnel.

Deng was taken before U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy for his initial court appearance last Friday late afternoon. Deng appeared with court-appointed counsel Mark Hanson. Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe appeared for the U.S. government.

According to Homeland Security Investigations Task Force officer Cristin Duenas, Deng went to the HSI office at the Marina Heights Building II in Puerto Rico last Thursday and that Federal Protective Service inspector Sean White assisted Deng, who spoke little English.

Duenas said that Deng presented a document that authorized him to obtain properties held in HSI's possession on behalf of his friend. When asked for identification, Deng presented a CNMI driver's license. Duenas said his search within their systems revealed that Deng is illegally present here as he entered the CNMI on Nov. 19, 2016, and was granted CNMI-only conditional parole by U.S. Customs and Border Protection that was effective until Dec. 1, 2016. DHS records also showed that Deng was administratively arrested on Feb.

22, 2019, and is currently in removal proceedings.

Since Deng has no legal immigration status, Duenas said that HSI personnel contacted the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles to check on Deng's driver's license.

Upon receiving copies of documents that Deng presented to BMV in the application for driver's license, HSI then checked the DHS system and found out that the receipt number listed on the I-797 form was valid but registered to another individual and not assigned to Deng.

Duenas said a records check conducted on Deng's name and date of birth revealed no immigration petitions to include the CW-1 visa.

Based on these results, it was determined that the I-797A submitted with the June 21, 2017 driver's license and operator's permit application form was fraudulent, he said.

Duenas said that Deng later confessed during an interview that he came to Saipan to work and was recruited in China. Deng recalled that he worked for two months at a construction site before being told that he did not have a job anymore.

Deng stated that he needed a driver's license in order to find work in the CNMI. A Chinese recruiter reportedly offered to get him a driver's license for \$1,500. Deng allegedly agreed and paid the recruiter the money. With the help of another person, Deng allegedly managed to get a driver's license. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

SMO animal shelter could be completed in a year

The Saipan Mayor's Office new, state-of-the-art, animal shelter could possibly be completed in a year's time, according to Dog Control Program manager Partin Pangelinan.

He declined to give an exact date but said he was informed that the shelter would be ready in possibly a year. "I don't really want to say. All I'm hearing from the leadership is 'soon.' They say it's going to happen in the span of one year

but we're just waiting on [Federal Emergency Management Agency] money," he said.

The current animal shelter in As Perdido took a massive hit following Super Typhoon Yutu, with the entire facility losing its ceiling and the kennels being damaged.

"The shelter is basically gone. We took a lot of damage and, until this day, we're still trying to recover. The kennels, on a scale from 1-10, they're

at a 4 or 5," he said.

Since Yutu, the shelter can only accommodate about 60 animals. According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, before Yutu, the shelter was able to house over 100 animals.

Pangelinan said despite the sustained damage, repairs have not been made to the current shelter because they are waiting on the new shelter that has been in the works since Super Typhoon Soudelor.

"The Dog Control Program is trying its best to make the pound look good and tidy it up but it's really hard and I think the reason why we're not actually fixing the shelter right now is because we might have a new shelter soon, so it's just a waiting game. They're working on getting us a top-of-the-line animal shelter for the Dog Control Program but, until it does happen, we're just dealing with what we have and we're trying to make it work," he said. (*Kimberly A. Bautista*)

IPI hires O'Connor law firm in contractor's suit, lien

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has hired the law firm of O'Connor Berman Horey & Banes as its counsel in a lawsuit filed against IPI by its former contractor, Pacific Rim Land Development LLC.

David G. Banes of the O'Connor law office informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI Tuesday of the firm's appearance as counsel for IPI in the Pacific Rim lawsuit.

Banes asked the court to move to a later date the probable cause hearing that is currently set for Dec. 20, 2019, to give the law firm more time to prepare and be briefed on the issues and to set a simultaneous briefing schedule.

Banes said he met with IPI last Friday about the consolidated Pacific Rim lawsuit and application for mechanic's

lien. He said the meeting was an emergency because IPI's general counsel, Phillip J. Tydingco, had resigned and his last day of employment was on that same day, Friday.

Banes said Tydingco's replacement, Joey Patrick San Nicolas, has reconsidered his appointment at the last minute last Thursday.

Banes said he and IPI agreed to the terms of representation, but he was not formerly retained until the afternoon of Monday, Dec. 16.

The lawyer said this case involves many complicated issues of first impression under CNMI law that require extensive research and preparation.

He said IPI is mindful that a goal of the CNMI's mechanic lien statute is to provide expedited resolution.

But Banes pointed out that, first of all, Pacific Rim has an enforceable remedy already:

the promissory note between the parties.

He said IPI is not seeking to delay the case; rather, its general counsel, Tydingco, who was handling this matter, suddenly resigned and he only gave two weeks' notice.

Banes said IPI acted promptly to find a replacement as its general counsel and hired San Nicolas as its new general counsel last Dec. 9. San Nicolas, however, reconsidered and, by last Thursday, no longer agreed to replace Tydingco.

Last Dec. 9, Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered the consolidation of Pacific Rim's lawsuit and an application for a mechanic's lien.

Pacific Rim, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, filed the lawsuit against IPI last Sept. 20 for alleged breach of contract. Pacific Rim subsequently filed an application

for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on.

A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

Last Dec. 3, Manglona dismissed the lawsuit for lack of jurisdiction but allowed the contractor to amend its complaint. Manglona also denied Pacific Rim's application for a mechanic's lien, but allowed the contractor to amend it.

Pacific Rim filed its amended complaint and an amended application for a mechanic's lien last Dec. 4. That same day, the company filed an application for a mechanic's lien against IPI in a new proceeding.

Pacific Rim originally sued IPI and five unnamed alleged co-conspirators for breach of contract (construction and

promissory note), and unjust enrichment.

Pacific Rim claimed to have substantially completed or completed the agreed-upon

construction work for IPI's casino-resort project on Sept. 30, 2018.

Thompson said IPI owes the contractor \$5.65 million.

AS PART OF ITS 28TH ANNIVERSARY JKPL presents series of author talks

As part of Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's celebration of its 28th year of serving the community and supporting local authors, the public is invited to the rare opportunity to meet, greet, and chat with several local and published authors over the course of its three-day series of events.

The author events start today, Dec 19, at 4:30pm with an informal question-and-answer session with author Walt F.J. Goodridge, author of over 24 books, including several about Saipan like *Chicken Feathers & Garlic Skin: Diary of a Chinese Garment Factory Girl on Saipan*, *Saipan Living*, *Saipan Now*, *From Bugle Boy to Battleship*, and *There's Something About Saipan*. Goodridge will be answering participant questions and speaking informally on "the wins and woes of being a Saipan writer," including where ideas come from, how to stay motivated, etc.

Lino Olopai, author of *Rope of Tradition*, will be the featured guest speaker on Friday, Dec. 20 at 4pm.

There will be an "Author Fair: Meet & Greet" all day Saturday, Dec. 21, from 11:30am to 2pm featuring Jane Mack, Lynn Tenorio, Denita Yangetimai, Olopai, Goodridge and Zaldy Dandan, who is editor of *Marianas Variety* and author of *Die! Bert! Die! & Other Fictions*, *We'll Kiss Like It's Air* and *We're Running Out of It*, and *How I Learned What Really (Probably) Happened to Amelia Earhart*. Authors will have books on sale.

The Meet & Greet will be followed by a special guest presentation at 3pm by Mack.

This unique 28th anniversary series of events kicks off today, Thursday, Dec. 19, at 10am with book donations by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan, and also includes bracelet-making demonstrations, an online scavenger hunt, art classes, Christmas carolers, and much more over the three days! Visit the library for more details or call 235-7323. (PR)

Micronesia Cruise Association reorganizes



Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, center in black and blue, meets with members of the newly reorganized Micronesia Cruise Association on Dec. 6, 2019, at the Guam Office of the Governor in Hagatna. *mva*

Tourism offices of Micronesia met in Guam on Dec. 6, 2019, to reorganize the Micronesia Cruise Association, which aims to make Micronesia a globally sought out regional cruise destination.

Members of MCA are the CNMI, Guam, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Kiribati. MCA's immediate goals are to facilitate regional collaboration in cultivating and growing market visibility, as well as encourage heritage conservation, authenticity, and differentiation of island destinations.

"The cruise industry has great growth potential in

the Marianas," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo, who represented the Marianas at the meeting. "The advantages of cruise ship tourism include lower infrastructure requirements and lower social and environmental impact on our small island communities. We hope to work collaboratively with the CNMI Commonwealth Ports Authority and other relevant agencies, as well as our partners across Micronesia, to grow this revenue stream for the Marianas and our region."

The association also had a courtesy call with Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. (MVA)



From left, Guam Visitors Bureau president and CEO Pilar Laguna, Marianas Visitors Authority project development manager Tatiana Babauta, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, and MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. *mva*

Bill to protect surrogates and their children goes to Torres

By **IVA MAURIN**
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REPORTER

The bill that would protect women and children in genetic and gestational surrogacy passed the Senate last Monday, and is now on its way to becoming a law.

Senate Bill 21-26, authored by Sen. Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), would update the CNMI Uniformed Parentage Act and establishes guidelines for genetic and gestational surrogacy by adopting the Uniformed Parentage Act of 2017.

"Parent-child relationships have been established through natural birth, adoption, and indigenous practices of the Chamorro and Carolinian customs," Sablan said. "However, with the advancement in technology over the years and the changing dynamics of spouses and families, the concept of establishing our parent-child relationships has evolved with the advanced assisted reproductive technologies for a person or a couple seeking an alternative way to become parents or expand their family."

With surrogacy now an option in the CNMI, the senator deemed it important to put in

place regulations to ensure that all parties are protected from any liability that may arise from the practice. That includes potential abuses like "wombs-for-hire" or becoming an "employment opportunity" for women, where a paid advertisement in the local newspaper seeking females between 21 to 40 and have at least given birth once naturally has been published.

"We saw that it is important that we put in these regulatory measures so that we protect our women here in the CNMI, as well as the children," Sablan said.

"...If you have seen it in the papers in [an] ad several months ago, and even last year, the intended parents were paying local surrogate mothers or possible surrogate mothers about \$20,000 to \$30,000 to carry these fetuses in their bodies."

The bill also wants to protect CNMI children in the future, Sablan said. "[This bill is intended] to ensure that our women are safe, these babies are safe, and that we can identify which of these children are indigenous or not in the future."

TanHoldings execs discover the Garapan Heritage Trail

TanHoldings executives and employees toured select sites on the Garapan Heritage Trail early this month, capping the trip to the historical sites in the village with a donation to the NMI Museum of History and Culture.

The tour, which was coordinated by TanHoldings' Corporate Affairs Office, started at the American Memorial Park's Visitors Center, where a 20-minute video of the events that transpired in the Marianas during World War II was shown. TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan joined the more than 50 TanHoldings executive and employees in the film viewing that aims to educate CNMI residents and tourists alike of the significant role that Saipan and Tinian played during the war.

"I hope more companies will do this tour to honor the Marianas and American people who died during the war and also educate tourists and residents about the rich Marianas history," said AMP ranger Brooke Nevitt.

The film viewing is free and available in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Russian.

From the AMP, the group hopped on a bus and made stops at the Catholic Church Bell Tower at the Kristo Rai Church, Sugar Train Locomotive, Matsue Statue, Saipan Jinja, and German Steps. Along the way, TanHoldings vice president for Corporate Business Development Alex Sablan, who also served as the group's tour guide, shared information about other parts of the Garapan Heritage Trail, which features 20 sites in all. These include the "Administration Hill," which was located just past the Catholic Church Bell Tower and was the seats of government for Germany and Japan when they still controlled the Northern Marianas; the Nambo Pier and Garapan Dock (now Garapan Fishing Base), which both served as commercial hubs during the German and Japanese occupations and, later, off-load sites for military supplies; and Latte Stone Monument (southwest corner of DFS), a tribute to the island's ancient indigenous ancestors.

A majority of the TanHoldings executives and employees were not aware of these sites and their history, so Tan said the tour was really an eye-opening experience for them and a good way to support the tourism industry in the CNMI.

"We live here, whether permanent or just temporary. We need to do our share in promoting our islands. We all have a role to play in promoting the CNMI to tourists and one way to help is by having the knowledge of the historical sites frequented by visitors. We can all be tour guides by knowing the history and location of these sites. Learn first hand and spread the word," Tan said.

The group's last stop was the NMI Museum of History and Culture, which used to be Japanese hospital in the mid-'20s. World War II memorabilia, pictures taken during the Japanese and German occupations of the CNMI, objects belonging to Chamorro and Carolinian ancestors, and artifacts, including those from the shipwreck of the galleon *Nuestra Senora dela Concepcion*, are on display at the museum, with tour guides providing valuable information about them.

"This is still a work-in-progress. We are doing our best to preserve and pro-



TanHoldings executives and employees pose for a photo at the Matsue Statue at the Sugar King Park in Garapan.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



NMI Museum of History and Culture director Danny Aquino Jr., fourth right, receives the ceremonial check donation from the Tan Siu Lin Foundation from TanHoldings executives, led by chief executive officer Jerry Tan, left, during the group's tour at the museum early this month.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Tour guide Archie Ajoste, left, provides information about the collections at the NMI Museum of History and Culture.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

mote our culture, history and tradition. Come and visit us. Let's educate our tourists and fellow residents. We need to be ambassadors of our island," said NMI Museum of History and Culture director Danny Aquino Jr., who received the \$2,500 check donation from the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, the charity arm of TanHoldings.

"We thank the TSL Foundation for their generosity and support to the NMI Museum. It [maintaining the museum] is tough, especially after the strong typhoons we went through, but we are still here and will continue to work on the improvements in our museum," Aquino added.

Tan commended Aquino and his staff for the significant transformation at the NMI Museum of History and Culture and vows to bring more TanHoldings employees to see the collections and exhibits.

"This is not the first. We will organize more tours for more employees. Having a tour guide to explain the various features of the museum makes a big difference," the TanHoldings CEO said. **(PR)**

Rough seas seen until Sunday

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents along east facing reefs lasting until Sunday. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Also, trade-wind surge producing fresh to strong winds and rough seas in coastal waters. A small craft advisory remains in effect through Sunday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, the high risk of rip currents could extend to north facing reefs.

Stay away from the reef line. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. Swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

The public is advised to avoid venturing out along east facing reefs and beaches. Strong rip currents will be life threatening.

East to northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots and combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will produce hazardous conditions for operators of small craft. Highest winds and seas will be east of the islands.

A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 15 to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft. The public and inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions. **(Saipan Tribune)**

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

As military academies investigate student hand signs, the way the OK gesture became a symbol of hate should be a warning to us all

We certainly hope that the hand symbol displayed by some students from the U.S. Naval and West Point military academies during the Army-Navy football game in Philadelphia on Saturday was nothing more than a juvenile gesture from the so-called “circle game,” in which one person shows the symbol—a circle made with the thumb and forefinger—and another gets a punch in the arm when caught viewing it.

It's the kind of testosterone-friendly pastime you can imagine being popular among boys and young men in boot camp, a frat house or a high school hallway. The game, supposedly developed by some guy in Ohio, has roots go-



A fan cheers as US President Donald Trump attends the Army-Navy football game in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on December 14, 2019. ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES/TNS

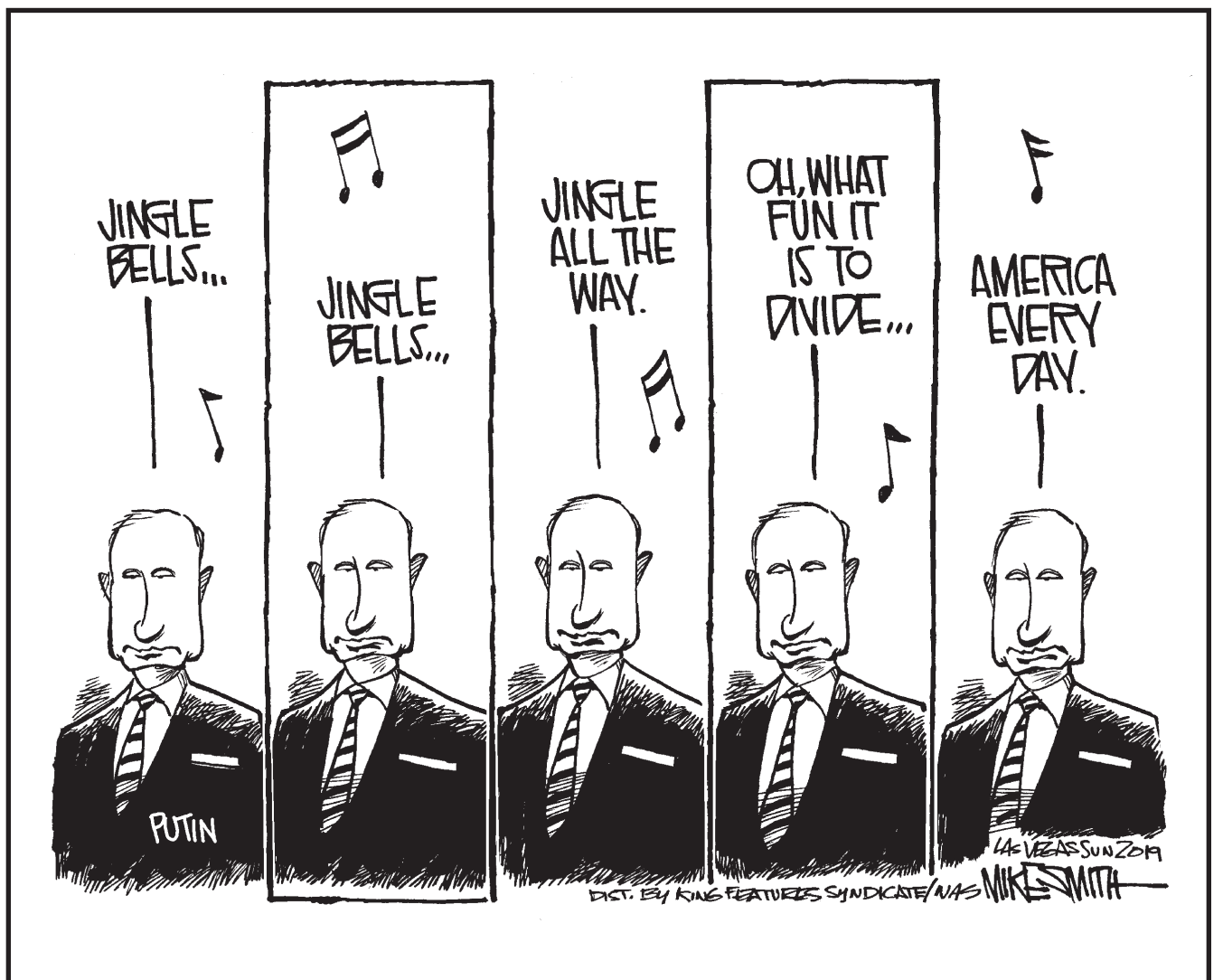
ing back to the 1980s and has been the topic of a Reddit discussion, an episode of “Malcolm in the Middle” and various online articles looking into its origin.

But we don't know. When the gesture was made in the stands during the football game's live telecast this weekend, many didn't see innocent idiocy; they saw white supremacy. And officials at each institution have since announced separate investigations into the displays, with the Naval Academy vowing to hold those involved “appropriately accountable” depending upon the findings.

Both the reaction to the symbol—and the reason for it—underscore the poisonous role of social media and the levels of division and suspicion we face as a country.

What we all largely knew as the “OK” hand symbol growing up (and for some, the circle game symbol) was debased as part of a pathetic prank in 2017, when a group

See **GESTURE** on Next Page



Humanity is overwhelming the planet

The COP25 climate change summit that just wrapped up in Madrid, Spain, was not the decisive plunge into climate action the world needed. In the lead up to the conference, 11,000 scientists declared “clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency,” and a half-million protesters in Madrid demanded we act accordingly. In the end, however, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres tweeted the world “lost an important opportunity.”

Unable to reach agreement on new rules for carbon trading or funding for climate change adaptation, the proverbial can was kicked down the road. Again.

We urgently need action on climate change, but even if we get it, there are larger issues. It's not just climate. Humanity is overwhelming the planet, its resources and its life-supporting capacity. We are not in any danger of extinction, not yet anyway. But the human juggernaut—and the needs and aspirations that propel it—is headed for a day of reckoning.

Economists like to say that inflation is what happens when there is “too much money chasing too few goods.” If a government keeps printing too much money, runaway inflation and economic collapse ensue. Something analogous is happening today in the natural world, where too many demands are chasing too few resources. If we keep piling more and more demands on our limited supply of land, water and other resources, nature will inevitably collapse.

The warning signs are everywhere. Our unrelenting demand for fossil fuels is destroying the climate, resulting in soaring temperatures, severe droughts, catastrophic flooding, rising seas, wildfires, the acidification of the oceans, disrupted weather patterns and extreme weather events. Our demand for grain and other crops is contributing to soil erosion, deforestation and the nitrification of our oceans. Our demand for fish is depleting ocean fisheries and our demand for plastic products is choking the ocean's marine life. Palm oil, hardwoods and soybean demand is leveling tropical forests and land demand is killing animal habitats.

Beyond the environmental toll, there's an escalating human cost: homes destroyed by wildfires and catastrophic storms and farms decimated by severe drought, rising temperatures or falling water tables. Young men in many parts of Asia and Africa are abandoning their rural communities in search of jobs in cities, and desperate mothers in the highlands of Guatemala and other drought-stricken areas are forced to migrate to feed their children.

When there are too many demands chasing too few resources, conflict can arise. Like in Sudan, where water scarcity fueled

By **ROBERT WALKER**

The Baltimore Sun

Robert Walker is the president of the Population Institute, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit striving to bring humanity into balance with nature.



ethnic tensions. Or places like Mali and Niger, where fights break out between herders and farmers during drought. In the future, a rising tide of climate refugees could destabilize entire regions and contribute to global political dysfunction.

We are experiencing a planetary emergency. Climate action is the first priority, as time is quickly running out. But we must also come to grips with the other challenges created by an expanding human footprint, including water scarcity, food insecurity and the extinction of plant and animal species.

We need to downsize the human enterprise. We must address world population, which the U.N. now projects will rise from 7.7 billion today to nearly 10 billion by mid-century and nearly 11 billion by the end of the century. We also must deal with the sheer size of the global economy, which by some estimates could double by mid-century or earlier.

Advancing reproductive freedom could dramatically lower the world's projected population growth. All women need access to contraception; that's fundamental. But beyond that, in the developing world, where the vast majority of the world's population growth is occurring, we should invest in the education of girls, eliminate child marriage and empower women. Smaller, healthier families are better equipped to deal with climate change.

Reining in resource depletion and environmental degradation is a harder task, but not impossible. It will require a fundamental reworking of capitalism, starting with carbon taxes, and a much larger tax overhaul that stiffly penalizes pollution and resource consumption. We must also ensure that technology, which now accelerates resource depletion, becomes our ally in the fight for global sustainability. Artificial intelligence could help us chart a sustainable course, but only if we act on the insights it provides.

The human enterprise is not without hope, but if future generations are to prosper, not merely survive, we must curb our overconsumption of resources and become better stewards of the planet.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Burnout a crisis among physicians in training

By **STEPHEN RUSSELL, SANJAY DESAI, and BRIAN GARIBALDI**
THE BALTIMORE SUN

This month, the American Medical Association invested \$15 million dollars in eight ambitious programs to address the workplace needs of our current health system. Among the goals of this grant was to address the crisis of burnout among training physicians by investing in wellness innovations. In many ways, it is an issue as important and consequential as President John F. Kennedy's moonshot program that became fully realized 50 years ago this summer.

In September 1962, when Kennedy stood beneath the brow-swabbing heat of Houston and claimed, "we choose to go to the moon in this decade and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard," he echoed a call to action that required the collaboration of a nation. Shortly after his January 1961 inauguration, Kennedy had pledged to a joint session of Congress to commit the nation to the moon program. Crystalizing his thinking under the Texas sun a year later, he said, "because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills."

And organize them it did. Houston would be home to the Mission Control Center. The U.S. Naval Academy in Maryland would become a pipeline program for astronauts. California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory provided American's satellite response to Sputnik and soon became part of NASA. So did Alabama's Army Ballistic Missile Agency, which went on to develop and produce the rockets that would carry America's astronauts to the moon and back. By July 1969, against staggering costs and steep odds, the nation had realized Kennedy's moonshot goal.

Just as President Kennedy saw that an urgent national problem can be solved with an ambitious national response, the American Medical Association aims as high with the urgent problem of physician well-being.

American physicians are weary, and it is affecting the health of our nation.

Half of practicing physicians experience burnout. Among physicians in training, up to 70% report symptoms of burnout. Numerous studies have shown that burnout negatively impacts clinical performance. And poor clinical performance risks the health of all patients. What is less clear, though, are the reasons for this medical professional blight and how to fix them.

In early 2019, the National Academy of Medicine identified the relationship between the learning environment and resident physician well-being as an area that needs further study. The AMA "Reimagining Residency" Grant has now given training programs an opportunity to do just that.

Like Kennedy's collaboration in the 1960s, we are partnering with institutions across the country to study the problem.

Our hypothesis is that increasing the time physicians spend directly with their patients will improve well-being and clinical skill. The task will not be easy. Studies show residents have far more continuity with a digital description of their patient than the actual person.

We believe the public deserves the same rigor of evidence in how to best train our physicians as it demands for foundational science. Working with residency programs at Johns Hopkins Bayview, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Stanford and University of Alabama Birmingham, we will create a "Graduate Medical Training Laboratory" to identify associations between the learning environment and burnout and clinical skill. Informed by these data, we will design and test interventions and prepare residents to practice patient-centered medicine for the 21st century.

We believe we must invest in the medical moonshot, not because it is easy, but because it is hard. But more than

that, because of what it will make of us in obtaining this information. Just as Kennedy's space exploration investment yielded unanticipated innovations in technology and teamwork, we hope the AMA's investment in medical education will also yield a renaissance of physician and patient communication during every clinical encounter. If in pursuing this medical moonshot we only serve to "measure the best of our energies and skills," the health of a nation will surely notice.

Dr. Stephen Russell (swrussell@uabmc.edu) is associate professor of medicine and pediatrics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Sanjay Desai (sanjaydesai@jhmi.edu) is vice chair for education within the Department of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where Dr. Brian Garibaldi (bgaribal1@jhmi.edu) is an associate professor of medicine and physiology.

Why, why, why, and why?

A Why Not Sonnet

Written in Danyang, South Korea, during autumn of 2019.

Four Y's are wise; why, why, why, and why?
ask and try to answer in four free tries
you'll get it right before too long
and end up singing a real wise song
you can make every stop end with go
youth with missions reduce ecological strife
YES is necessary to understand NO
Try and wish Happy Birthday to life
If you say happy birthday to death
You'll lose your breath and then no more
Sunny days say smile grin and bear it
You got troubles find friends and share it.

21st Century Narcissist Nursery Rhymes

Trumpty Dumpty meets Mother Goose

Bigly Trumpty Dumpty my bigly boss Don
tweeting thousands of lies all one big con
corrupt circus master elephants at his command
emolument income galore foreign money he demands
impeachment questions now hitting hot and heavy
go for broke tariffs he continues to levy
time after time in deep doodoo denial
thousands of lies pile up mile after mile.

POTUS Perennial Playtime Policy Plans

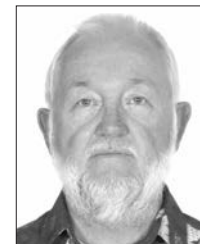
"This old man he played one he played knick knack with his thumb

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



*with a knickknack paddy whack give the dog a bone
this old man*

came rolling home"

—19th century British nonsense verse that helps children learn to count

POTUS plan, year number one
tweeted twit with his two thumbs
with a click clack whacked out whack on his cell phone
POTUS 45 planned policy in his "dump" alone.
POTUS plan year number two off to Mar A Lago he flew
with a putter and driver on Air Force One
the malignant "stable genius" was having fun
POTUS fall began in earnest in year number three
three generals had left all of them glad to be free
staff and cabinet changes almost every day
impeachment hearings all making headway
Trumpty Dumpty's falling off the wall but when
Moscow Mitch can't bring him back again
with a click clack whacked out whack on cell phone.

GESTURE

From Page 10

of online chat participants launched an experiment to see if they could get others to believe the gesture was a secret sign of white power.

Called "Operation O-KKK," the goal, according to a screen grab of the post outlining the assignment, was to "flood twitter and other social media websites with spam, claiming that the OK hand signal is a symbol of white supremacy."

Use the hashtag "#PowerHandPrivilege" in all of your tweets and whatnot related to this," the directions said. "Bonus points if your profile pic is something related to supporting feminism. Leftists have dug so deep down in their lunacy. We must force (them) to dig more, until the rest of society ain't going anywhere near that (expletive)."

The phony claims about the symbol spread like wildfire online, and before too long, actual white supremacists reportedly adopted it as their own. And now, no one knows what to

think when someone flashes the gesture—a perfect environment for conspiracy theories to thrive. Are they saying "OK?" Or "I'm a white supremacist?"

That's the backdrop for the football game hand signage. A broadcast showed students from each academy displaying the hand signal at least five times behind the back of ESPN anchor Rece Davis before the game, which was attended by President Donald Trump—a hero to the white supremacist set.

By Sunday, the investigations were underway, as they should be. There simply is no benefit of the doubt for the nation's military academies. They wield too much power. And while the academies have made efforts to diversify in the past several decades, they, like many other American institutions, are still overwhelmingly white and haunted by long histories of overt racial discrimination.

Just last year, the Naval Academy expelled a white midshipman for using a racial slur to describe African Americans, and two white U.S. Coast Guard Academy cadets were disciplined for harassing a black classmate by playing a racially offensive song and posting a flag with a Confederate symbol






on his computer screen.

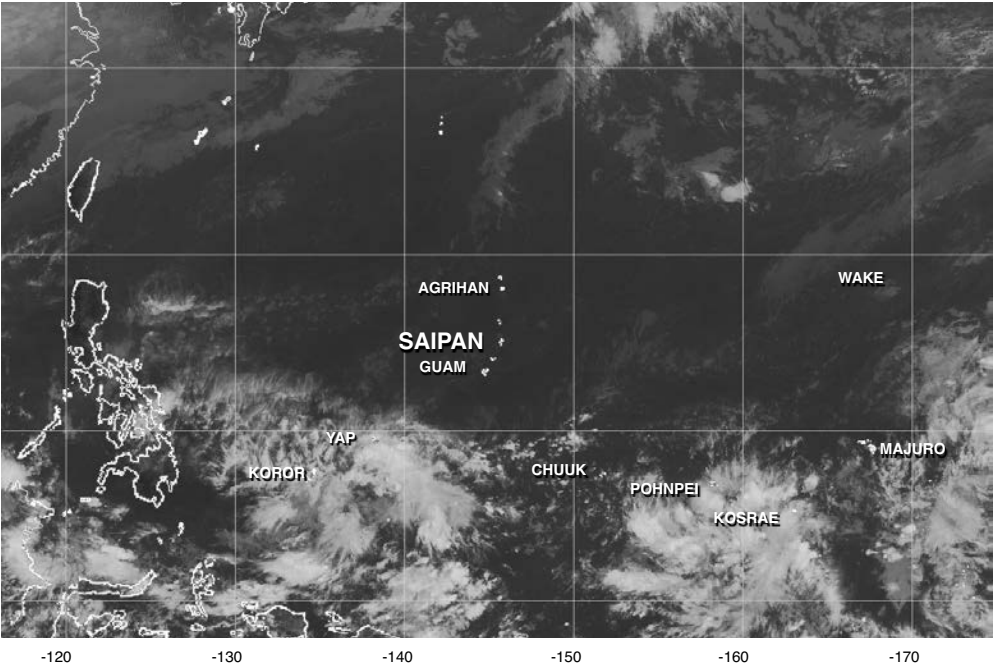
So yes, there must be a full and public accounting of what went on. If future military members are purposely flashing what they understand to be hate symbols, they should be swiftly and severely dealt with. Even if the actions were made in jest, the glaring lack of judgment they reveal should be enough to disqualify participants from serious service to our country.

And if it turns out this is a case of boys being boys by embracing an obnoxious game on-camera, then the officers in training deserve to be cleared of the racism charges, which could otherwise brand them for life. Until the results are in, we'll reserve judgment on whether their actions were sinister or simply immature.

But there's a lesson and a warning in this incident for all of us: Check your sources, because it doesn't take a Russian mastermind to manipulate reality on social media. Any fool with a few minutes to spare can do it.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East to north-east winds 20 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	77°	86°	76°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:05 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019
WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC BETWEEN EQUATOR AND 25N FROM 130E TO 180.

Fresh to strong trades will last through the week. A shallow moist layer capped by extremely dry air aloft will allow no more than isolated showers delivering only small quantities of rainfall through the week. High cloudiness flowing north from deep convection south of the region will render skies mostly cloudy over the weekend, but no increase in showers is expected.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an up-dated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA ▼ ▲ °F		
Guam and Rota	Windy	85° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE ▼ ▲ °F		
Auckland	Rain	70° / 57°
Beijing	Sunny	37° / 16°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70° / 64°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	83° / 73°
London	Showers	54° / 48°
Los Angeles	Sunny	68° / 49°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Sunny	106° / 70°
Miami	Showers	73° / 70°
New York	Mostly Sunny	40° / 19°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	55° / 46°
Paris	Showers	55° / 52°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	50° / 34°
Rome	Showers	61° / 48°
Salem	Sunny	53° / 32°
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	56° / 48°
Seoul	Sunny	37° / 21°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 43°
Washington, DC	Sunny	34° / 23°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
6:55 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.07
2:07 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.80
8:40 PM	LOW TIDE	0.71
-	-	-

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Monday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	-	12:25 PM
Friday	-	12:40 AM	1:08 PM
Saturday	-	1:36 AM	1:52 PM
Sunday	-	2:32 AM	2:36 PM
Monday	-	3:29 AM	3:22 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily	SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
				SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6	TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily



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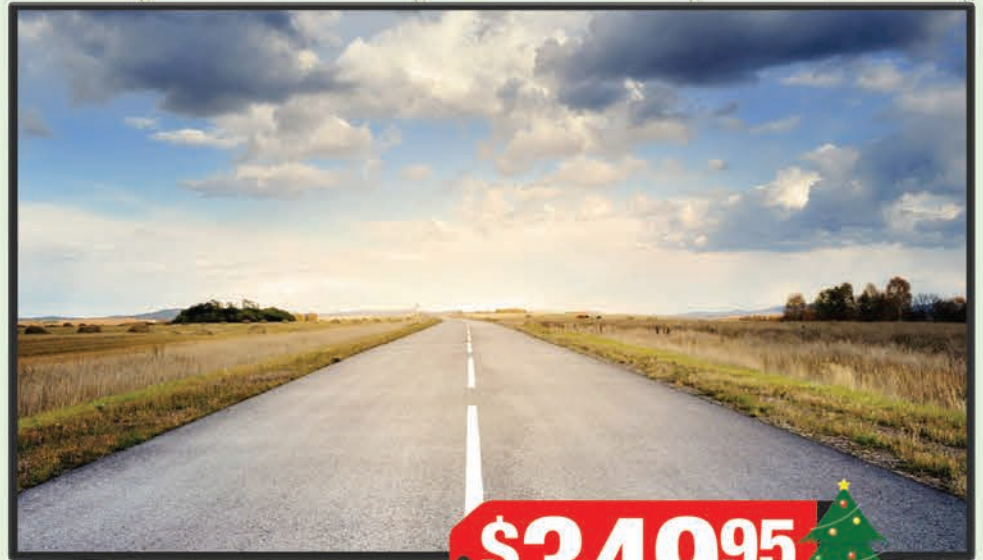


MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED



VIZIO 55" HDTV

-\$399⁹⁵



KONCHRIS 55" 4K TV

-\$349⁹⁵



ATYME 32" LED HD TV

-\$139⁹⁵



KONCHRIS 49" 4K TV

-\$299⁹⁵



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20% OFF

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SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED.

10% OFF

ALL BILLBOARD & BLAUPUNKT PARTY SPEAKERS



15% OFF

ALL YIWU 110 VOLT CHILDRENS RIDE ON VEHICLES



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Business



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Oteph's BBQ opened in the village of Chalan Kanoa last Dec. 4 just in time for the holidays.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Oteph's BBQ's pork barbecue.

Oteph's BBQ opens in Chalan Kanoa

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Another barbecue joint has opened on Saipan, this time in the village of Chalan Kanoa. Oteph's BBQ opened shop last Dec. 4 just in time for the holidays.

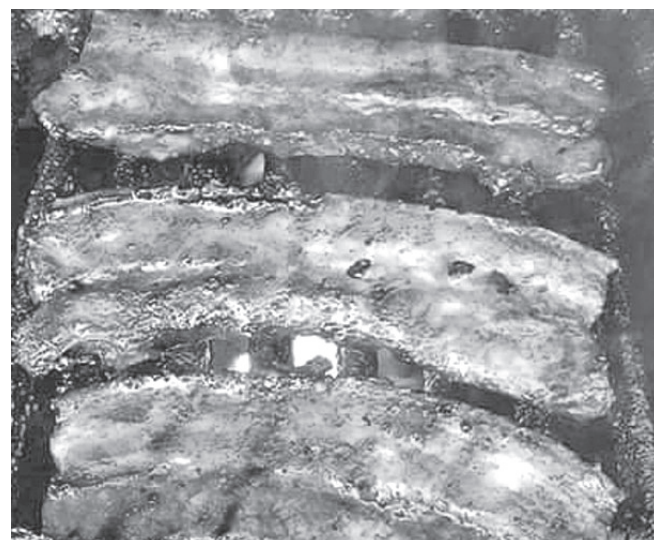
Michelle Olita, who owns and operates the business with her husband, Jun, said that opening their barbecue stand on Dec. 4 was no coincidence as the number is special to their family.

"No. 4 is a very lucky number for us, because my youngest son, Jyosef, was born on June 4," she said, adding that their son is also the inspiration behind the store's name; Oteph is his nickname.

"We decided to open up a barbecue business because we know that barbecue is very popular at catered events, festivals, birthdays, or just a simple family dinner. I...love food and love cooking, and we know that there's a lot of barbecue enthusiasts on Saipan that's always on the lookout for restaurants or places that serves good food and the best barbecue meals. And Oteph's BBQ is one of them!" she said.

Oteph's BBQ currently sells barbecue to-go only, but wants to expand to dine-in if the business prospers, according to Michelle.

Aside from the usual barbecue mainstays like pork and chicken, Michelle and Jun's



Oteph's BBQ's pork liempo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

barbecue outlet also offers chicken inasal, grilled squid, lechon belly, pork liempo, pork ears, crispy pork sisig, beef intestine, and deep-fried barbecue chicken.

Michelle admits that Saipan is an increasingly competitive environment, especially when it comes to food or barbecue, but encourages everyone to taste their offerings to fully appreciate Oteph's BBQ's unique taste and flavor, aside from getting more bang for the buck.

"We live on a very small island but you can find numerous barbecue stands and restaurants. What we can offer at Oteph's BBQ are quality serving, tasteful menu, and affordable prices. We not only cater barbecue, we also have

snacks, refreshing drinks, and complete sumptuous meals."

Aside from having an entrepreneurial mindset, Michelle said her passion for cooking also led to Oteph's BBQ. "I love food and love cooking. Cooking for my kids and my family has always been my source of happiness. So I thought, why not convert it to a business?" she said.

Oteph's BBQ is located along Francisco St. corner Lucia St. in Chalan Kanoa District 1 and it is open from 3pm to 10pm daily. Starting Jan. 1, 2020, the barbecue stand will be open from 11am to 10pm, Monday-Sunday.

For advance orders and inquiries, call Michelle and Jun at 488-0722 or 588-5509.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

PG&E, California wildfire victims rework \$13.5B settlement

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Pacific Gas & Electric reworked a \$13.5 billion settlement with victims of deadly wildfires blamed on the utility to try to prevent it from unraveling after California Gov. Gavin Newsom rejected the company's financial rehabilitation plan. The revision discussed in a bankruptcy court hearing Tuesday removes a provision requiring Newsom to approve the deal as a key piece of PG&E's plan to emerge from bankruptcy protection by June 30. The company must meet that deadline to qualify for coverage in a special fund state lawmakers approved last summer to help insulate utilities from losses caused by future wildfires ignited by outdated transmission lines. Newsom had jeopardized the pivotal settlement with the victims of cata-

strophic wildfires during 2017 and 2018 when he refused to give it his blessing Friday as part of PG&E's bankruptcy plan. The Democratic governor concluded that the settlement doesn't comply with state law. He believes the proposal doesn't include enough changes to enable PG&E to come out of bankruptcy with the financial wherewithal and expertise needed to provide safe and reliable service to its 16 million customers.

Man pays electric bills for families about to lose power

GULF BREEZE, Fla. (AP)—A Florida man who once spent a Christmas without electricity is paying it forward literally. He paid the power bills for 36 families with past due accounts. Mike Esmond says he will never forget the Christmas he and his three daughter spent in 1983 without heat and power because he couldn't pay his

bill. He says it was one of the coldest days on record in Pensacola at only 9 degrees and remembers there were icicles hanging off the window. The 73-year-old small business owner says he doesn't want any other families to spend the holidays shivering. He went to the city of Gulf Breeze this month and requested a list of all utility accounts that were past due and at risk of having their gas and water turned off. Then he paid off all 36 of them, totaling about \$4,600. The Pensacola News Journal reports that instead of sending out notices that their gas and water were being shut off, the city sent out cards notifying the residents of Esmond's gift. Angela Cascio says she was stunned by the stranger's kindness. The mother of four was struggling to choose between paying bills or buying presents for her kids. She posted a Facebook message saying "angels absolutely walk among us."

House passes \$1.4T government spending bill amid impeachment

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Democratic-controlled House voted Tuesday to pass a \$1.4 trillion government spending package, handing President Donald Trump a victory on his U.S.-Mexico border fence while giving Democrats spending increases across a swath of domestic programs.

The hard-fought legislation also funds a record Pentagon budget and is serving as a must-pass legislative locomotive to tow an unusually large haul of unrelated provisions into law, including an expensive repeal of Obama-era taxes on high-

cost health plans, help for retired coal miners, and an increase from 18 to 21 in the nationwide legal age to buy tobacco products.

The two-bill package, some 2,371 pages long after additional tax provisions were folded in on Tuesday morning, was unveiled Monday afternoon and adopted less than 24 hours later as lawmakers prepared to wrap up reams of unfinished work against a backdrop of Wednesday's vote on impeaching Trump.

The House first passed a measure funding domestic programs on a 297-120 vote.

But one-third of the Democrats defected on a 280-138 vote on the second bill, which funds the military and the Department of Homeland Security, mostly because it funds Trump's border wall project.

The spending legislation would forestall a government shutdown this weekend and give Trump steady funding for his U.S.-Mexico border fence, a move that frustrated Hispanic Democrats and party liberals. The year-end package is anchored by a \$1.4 trillion spending measure that caps a difficult, monthslong battle over spending priorities.



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EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	1.4596	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7870	Russian Ruble	62.3342
British Pound	0.7628	Indian Rupee	70.3743	Singapore Dollar	1.3566
Canadian Dollar	1.3161	Japanese Yen	109.4370	South Korean Won	1144.10
Chinese Yuan	6.8806	Malaysian Ringgit	4.0978	Swiss Franc	0.9805
Euro	0.8982	New Zealand Dollar	1.5228	Taiwan Dollar	29.6368
		Philippine Peso	49.6155	Thailand Baht	30.2165

Nation

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump is on the cusp of being impeached by the House, with a historic debate set Wednesday on charges that he abused his power and obstructed Congress ahead of votes that will leave a defining mark on his tenure at the White House.

Trump, who would be just the third U.S. president to be impeached, on Tuesday fired off a furious letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi denouncing the “vicious crusade” against him, but he also acknowledged he was powerless to stop the expected outcome.

“When people look back at this affair, I want them to understand it, and learn for it, so that it can never happen to another president again,” he wrote.

Pelosi, who warned earlier this year against pursuing a strictly partisan impeachment, nonetheless has the numbers from Democrats to approve it. According to a tally compiled by The Associated Press, Trump is on track to be formally charged by a House majority.

“Very sadly, the facts have made clear that the President abused his power for his own personal, political benefit and that he obstructed Congress,” Pelosi wrote to colleagues, asking them to join in the morning as the House convenes.

“In America, no one is above the law,” she said. “During this very prayerful moment in our nation’s history, we must honor our oath to



Protesters hold signs in front of the White House Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019 in Washington. AP

Trump on brink of impeachment as HOUSE READIES HISTORIC VOTE

support and defend our Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

The rare undertaking to impeach a president, set to unfold over more than six hours of debate Wednesday, is splitting the lawmakers in Congress much the way Americans have different

views of Trump’s unusual presidency and the articles of impeachment against him.

Trump implores Americans to “read the transcript,” but the facts of his phone call with the Ukraine president are not necessarily in dispute. Trump asked Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate Democrats and his

2020 political rival Joe Biden. At the time, the newly elected Ukraine leader was hoping for a coveted White House visit to showcase his standing with the U.S., his country’s most important ally. He was also counting on nearly \$400 mil-

lion in military aid as his country confronts a hostile neighbor, Russia.

The question for lawmakers, and Americans, is whether those actions, and the White House’s block on officials testifying for the House

4 dead, several injured across South in outbreak of twisters

ALEXANDRIA, La. (AP)—A swarm of tornadoes and other storms that left a trail of destruction across the Southeast killed four people, injured at least a dozen more and left victims to bundle up against the cold as they picked through pieces of their homes on Tuesday.

The death toll rose to four after heavy overnight rains caused flooding in Greenup County, Kentucky. Water rescue crews were called in about 8 a.m. Tuesday to aid two people, and at least one of them died, Kentucky State Police Trooper Bobby King said. He said crews were still trying to rescue another person.

National Weather Service teams confirmed at least 18 tornado paths: nine in Mississippi, six in Alabama and three in Louisiana. The number could rise since teams were still surveying damage.

Col. Bryan Olier, chief of staff at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency,

told a news conference that at least 25 counties were affected, 150 homes reported damaged or destroyed and about a dozen people injured. “We had a storm front that went ... from the southwest corner of the state to almost central—some 60 to 80 miles (100 to 130 kilometers),” Gov. Phil Bryant said.

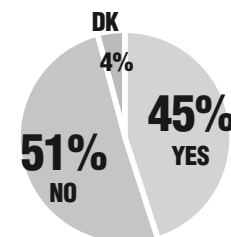
The Storm Prediction Center logged more than three dozen reports of storm damage from east Texas to Georgia.

“The cat flew,” said Tonia Tyler of Pineville, Louisiana. “It picked the cat up, and the cat flew—my cat—it flew across the yard. And I knew right there, I said ‘Oh God, we’re not going to make it.’”

In north Alabama, Lawrence County Coroner Scott Norwood said the bodies of Justin Chase Godsey, 35, and Keisha LeAnn Cross Godsey, 34, were found more than 200 yards (183 meters) from their home, the Decatur Daily

Impeachment opinions

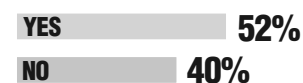
Do you think that President Trump should be impeached and removed from office?



Do you think the president abuses the power of his office?



Do you think the president was pursuing his own personal interest in his dealings with Ukraine?



Do you think that President Trump held up military aid to Ukraine because he wanted the Ukrainian president to announce investigations that would benefit Trump politically?



Do you think the president has committed any crimes while in office?



Source: Quinnipiac University
Graphic: Staff, TNS

investigation, are impeachable offenses.

In his letter on Tuesday, Trump defended his “absolutely perfect” phone call that sparked the impeachment inquiry.

Washington state sues over courthouse immigration arrests

SEATTLE (AP)—Washington state sued the Trump administration Tuesday seeking to stop its practice of arresting people at courthouses for immigration violations, saying it interferes with the state’s authority to run its judicial system and endangers public safety.

The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle says that when Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Customs and Border Protection agents patrol courthouse hallways and parking lots it deters crime victims and witnesses from testifying and interferes with criminal prosecutions.

Among the hundreds of people recently arrested at courthouses in Washington were an assault victim, a domestic violence survivor seeking a protection order and a married father of U.S.-

citizen children with a pending application for legal permanent residency, Attorney General Bob Ferguson said at a news conference.

“Federal immigration officials are arresting people with no criminal history at all. They are arresting people who are paying traffic tickets. They are arresting people who are crime victims,” Ferguson said. “As a result, and not surprisingly at all, individuals are refusing to participate in our justice system.”

A similar lawsuit in Massachusetts resulted in a preliminary court order blocking immigration agents from making civil arrests—a decision Ferguson described as a “roadmap” for Washington’s case. The Trump administration has appealed that order.

Washington’s lawsuit escalates tension between

state and federal authorities over immigration enforcement. Federal authorities have insisted that state and local “sanctuary” policies limiting cooperation with immigration agents endanger the public by making it harder to deport dangerous criminals.

Federal prosecutors in Massachusetts recently charged a judge there with obstructing justice by letting a defendant avoid an immigration arrest by slipping out a back door of the courthouse. In a statement emailed by spokeswoman Tanya Roman on Tuesday, ICE said it “will continue to carry out its mission to uphold public safety and enforce immigration law, and consider carefully whether to refer those who obstruct our lawful enforcement efforts for criminal prosecution.”

Asia

Money talks: Hong Kong protesters weaponizing spending power

HONG KONG (AP)—The Hong Kong protesters formed a line, patiently waiting their turn to buy sweet milk and tea drinks from a store that advertised ardent support for their cause with a banner declaring, “If you set off a nuclear blast, we’ll stick by you.”

For quicker service, they could have quenched their thirsts at an adjacent store that also sells bubble tea. It had no customers.

Which is exactly as the protesters intended.

Digging in for the long haul against Hong Kong’s government, protesters are expanding their struggle from the streets to their wallets, weaponizing their spending power to punish businesses they deem hostile to their cause. The aim: to drive some firms under in the deepening recession gripping the crisis-hit city.

Guiding the consumer choices of tech-savvy protesters are apps that increasingly are color-coding businesses—everything from dentistry clinics and toy stores to dumpling restaurants and sex shops—into two categories: yellow for protest-friendly, blue for suspected opponents.

“Blue! blue!” protesters yelled outside the bubble tea shop they shunned during a rally this month that marked the half-year milestone for their movement.

The protests started in June to voice opposition to now-withdrawn extradition leg-



AP
Miniature folded paper hard hats are spread along a plaza during a rally in Hong Kong, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

islation and have morphed into what demonstrators say is a full-blown fight to safeguard Hong Kong’s freedoms, unique among China’s cities. Months of clashes with riot police who have fired 26,000 tear-gas and rubber-baton rounds and arrested more than 6,100 people are radicalizing legions of youths, upending the city’s economy, and splitting families, work colleagues, friends and citizens into two entrenched camps.

Even employees of the supposedly “blue” bubble tea store, wearing face masks like many of the demonstrators, advised them not to shop there, saying the company wasn’t sympathetic to the protest movement.

“It stands for the police,” protester Natasha Chan said, clutching a grapefruit and lemon tea purchased instead from the “yellow” Happy Holidays drinks store next door. “We chose not to shop from the

blue side.”

Protesters believe that by boycotting supposedly pro-establishment businesses, they can help shift the balance of power and wealth in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Much of the city’s \$345 billion economy and political influence are concentrated in the hands of magnates and

enterprises linked to or supportive of mainland China and its Communist Party-led government—the ultimate boss of Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam.

Protesters also say that shopping “yellow” is another way to make their voices heard in the absence of direct elections for government leaders. Protesting with their wal-

lets also enables people who can’t always join street rallies, including those who fear being fired by pro-China employers, to otherwise contribute to the movement.

Before marching in the rally for the half-year milestone, accountant Nakata Law lined up for 15 minutes to support a snack shop that has donated to the protesters’ cause, buying its steamed dumplings and gluey rice pancakes. A poster on the Jar Gor eatery says: “Support Yellow. This store has been rated as a true Hong Konger merchant.”

“Most of the economy is controlled by China,” Law said. “The citizens’ view is that if we do not have our own economic circle in Hong Kong, we cannot support our protests to keep carrying on.”

In the opposing camp, Phyllis Li, a systems analyst who believes protest violence has gotten out of hand, says she now deliberately chooses to eat at restaurants that protesters boycott “because it is not fair to them.”

“And because it’s safe for us, too, because they don’t go,” she said.

Protests of India’s citizenship law grow, along with clashes

NEW DELHI (AP)—Protests spread Tuesday across India against a new law that provides a path to citizenship for non-Muslims entering illegally from several neighboring countries, with angry demonstrators clashing with police.

Police fired tear gas in the Seelampur area of New Delhi to push back demonstrators who burned a police booth and two motorbikes after throwing stones and swarming barricades.

Roads leading to the Muslim-majority neighborhood were littered with stones, tear gas canisters and broken glass.

“We are protesting against the new citizenship law. They are saying if you don’t have any proof (of citizenship) ... they will send us out of India,” said 15-year-old Mohammad Shehzad.

Protests also were reported in the states of West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and elsewhere of the law, which was passed in Parliament last week. On Sunday, a march by students at New Delhi’s Jamia Millia Islamia University

descended into chaos when demonstrators set three buses ablaze. Police responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. Video showed officers chasing unarmed protesters and beating them with sticks.

Hanjala Mojibi, an English major at the predominantly Muslim school, said that when he and others saw police enter the campus, they walked toward them with their hands up to indicate the protest was nonviolent.

“The police made all 15 of us kneel and started beating us. They used lots of abusive words. One of them removed my prescription glasses, threw (them) on the ground, broke them and told me to look down,” Mojibi said through tears at a news conference.

Also on Sunday, police stormed Aligarh Muslim University in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, firing tear gas and injuring five people participating in a student-led demonstration, university spokesman Rahat Abrar said.

Shahid Hussain, a 25-year-old history major, said police broke windows in his dormitory and lobbed a tear gas canister inside. After fleeing the building to escape the fumes, police pushed him against a tree and beat him with sticks, he said.

Police spokesman Sunil Bainsla denied the account, calling allegations of police brutality “lies.”

The police response to the protests has drawn widespread condemnation. It also has sparked a broader movement against the Citizenship Amendment Act, with demonstrations erupting across the country.

The new law applies to Hindus, Christians and other religious minorities who are in India illegally but can demonstrate religious persecution in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It does not apply to Muslims.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has described the law as a humanitarian gesture.

US opposes lifting key sanctions against North Korea

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United States said Tuesday that it opposes a draft resolution proposed by China and Russia that would terminate U.N. sanctions on key North Korean exports, calling the measure “premature” at a time when Pyongyang is threatening to conduct “an escalated provocation” and is refusing to meet with U.S. officials to discuss denuclearization.

The U.S. State Department said President Donald Trump “remains committed to making progress toward commitments” he made with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at their first summit in Singapore in June 2018 on transforming relations between the two countries, building lasting peace and ensuring complete denuclearization.

A State Department statement said the U.S. remains committed to diplomacy to make progress toward these goals, but it “cannot do this alone.”

The draft resolution circulated to U.N. Security Council members Monday night

would terminate sanctions on North Korean exports including textiles, seafood and statues with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population. It would also lift a ban on North Koreans working overseas and terminate a decision to repatriate all those earning income abroad by Dec. 22.

China and Russia made these and other proposals 16 days before Kim’s end-of-December deadline for the United States to come up with new proposals to revive nuclear diplomacy.

Negotiations faltered after the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North’s nuclear capabilities at Kim’s second summit with Trump last February.

North Korea has carried out 13 ballistic missile launches since May trying to pressure Washington, and it has hinted at lifting its moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests if the Trump administration fails to make substantial concessions

before the new year.

China’s U.N. ambassador, Zhang Jun, told reporters Tuesday that the resolution is not aimed at splitting the 15-member Security Council but pursuing “a united approach approach in obtaining peace and security” on the Korean peninsula and “to send a positive, constructive message to the parties concerned that we do not want a deteriorated situation, we do not want a confrontation.”

“You cannot simply expect one party to do more things and with the other party sitting there idle,” Zhang said. “We need both parties to walk towards each other so as to build up mutual trust. With one step forward from one party, and then the other party, makes that two steps forward. That’s something positive, that’s something constructive.”

Otherwise, he said, there will be further mistrust leading to “more negative things and hesitation” and “we’ll move backward again, and it will be” even further from denuclearization and peace.

World

Protesters in Arab world's newest uprisings face a long haul

BAGHDAD (AP)—Abbas Ali spends most of his free time camped out in Tahrir Square—the epicenter of Iraq's anti-government protests—going home only at 3 a.m. to catch few hours of sleep, change his clothes and check on his family. He is determined to stay in the square until the end, whatever that may be.

Ali was only 13 when the U.S.-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein. He only vaguely remembers life under the dictator. What he knows clearly is that life in post-Saddam Iraq is a daily, often humiliating struggle for survival.

The 29-year-old considers himself lucky to have a job, although the pay barely covers medical bills for his ailing father and elderly mother. His two brothers and sister are unemployed. So are most of his friends. He says marriage is the furthest thing from his mind since he couldn't possibly afford to start a family.

Angry at factional, sectarian politicians and clerics he blames for stealing Iraq's wealth, Ali embodies the young Iraqis in Baghdad who for more than two months have waged a revolt calling for the downfall of a hated political class.

A similar scene is taking place in tiny Lebanon, where for 62 days now, young people have protested the political elite in charge since the 1975-90 civil war, blaming them for pillaging the country to the point of bankruptcy.

The sustained, leaderless protests are unprecedented and have managed to bring down the governments of both countries. But they have been unable to topple their ruling systems: The same politicians have kept their hold, wrangling and stalling over forming new governments and ignoring the broader calls for radical reform.

The standoff gets more dangerous as it draws out, posing the most serious existential threat in years—in Iraq since Saddam's 2003 ouster and in Lebanon since the civil war's end. Iraq has been plunged into yet another cycle of violence with more than 450 protesters killed by security forces. Lebanon is on the verge of chaos, with a looming economic disaster.

The protests reflect a broader malaise playing out across much of the Arab world. As the Middle East ushers in 2020, experts say a new kind of uprising is unfolding.

Pope Francis celebrates a Mass for the Philippine community of Rome, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican to Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

AP



Pope removes shroud of secrecy from clergy sex abuse cases

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Francis abolished the use of the Vatican's highest level of secrecy in clergy sexual abuse cases Tuesday, responding to mounting criticism that the rule of "pontifical secrecy" has been used to protect pedophiles, silence victims and prevent police from investigating crimes.

Victims and their advocates cheered the move as long overdue, but cautioned that the proof of its effectiveness would come when the Catholic hierarchy is forced to respond to national inquiries, grand jury subpoenas and criminal prosecutions who are increasingly demanding all internal documentation about abusers.

The Vatican's leading sex crimes investigator, Archbishop Charles Scicluna, said the reform was an "epochal decision" that will facilitate coordination with civil law enforcement and open up lines of communication with victims.

"The carnival of obscurity is over," declared Juan Carlos Cruz, a prominent Chilean survivor of clergy abuse and advocate for victims.

In a new law, Francis decreed that information in abuse cases must be protected by church leaders to ensure its "security, integrity and confidentiality." But he said the rule of "pontifical secrecy" no longer applied to abuse-related accusations, trials and decisions under the Catholic Church's canon law.

The Vatican's leading sex crimes investigator, Archbishop Charles Scicluna, said the reform was an "epochal decision" that will facilitate coordination with civil law enforcement and open up lines of communication with victims.

While documentation from the church's in-house legal proceedings will still not become public, Scicluna said, the reform now removes any excuse to not cooperate with legitimate legal requests from prosecutors, police or other civil authorities.

Francis also raised from 14 to 18 the cutoff age below

which the Vatican considers pornographic images to be child pornography. The reform is a response to the Vatican's increasing awareness of the prolific spread of online child porn that has frequently implicated even high-ranking churchmen.

The new laws were issued Tuesday, Francis' 83rd birthday, as he struggles to respond to the global explosion of the abuse scandal, his own missteps and demands for greater transparency and accountability from victims, law enforcement and ordinary Catholics alike.

"The reforms are long overdue but symbolize an im-

portant step in the right direction," said SNAP, the victims advocacy group. "Still right now they are only words on paper and what needs to happen next is concrete action."

The new norms are the latest amendment to the Catholic Church's in-house canon law—a parallel legal code that metes out ecclesial justice for crimes against the faith—in this case relating to the sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable people by priests, bishops or cardinals. In this legal system, the worst punishment a priest can incur is being defrocked, or dismissed from the clerical state.



ACROSS THE NATION

Italy cartoon depicting EU as Nazi camp sparks outcry

ROME (AP)—A cartoonist in Rome has sparked a heated controversy in Italy and abroad after depicting the European Union as the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as an escaping prisoner. Artist Mario Improta posted the cartoon on his Twitter account Saturday, after Johnson's Conservatives won a majority in the U.K. election. Johnson ran on a platform of "get Brexit done," vowing to take Britain out of the European Union by the scheduled deadline of Jan. 31. The cartoon features Johnson waving a British flag as he flees a concentration camp with the inscription "European Union" in the same position as the words "Arbeit macht frei" ("Work sets you free") are at

the entrance of the Nazi camp. The comparison between the EU and a concentration camp immediately prompted a wave of criticism from politicians, Rome's Jewish community and even some of the artist's followers on Twitter. The Auschwitz Memorial tweeted in Italian, noting that "'Arbeit macht frei' was a cynical illusion that the SS gave to prisoners of Auschwitz. Those words have become one of the icons of human hatred. It is painful for the memory of Auschwitz and its victims to see this symbol used and shamefully abused." The artist has become well-known in Italy as the author of an educational campaign for Rome featuring Mayor Virginia Raggi as a Manga hero. Raggi distanced herself from the cartoon and halted the collaboration with Improta.

Leaders of Russia, Turkey discuss fighting in Libya

MOSCOW (AP)—The leaders of Russia and Turkey discussed the fighting in Libya in a phone call Tuesday, the Kremlin said. It said in a statement that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan voiced their readiness to help establish contacts between the warring parties and expressed support for mediation efforts by the United Nations and Germany. Libya plunged into turmoil after the 2011 civil war that ousted and killed long-time dictator Moammar Gadhafi. The country has been split into two parts, with a weak U.N.-supported government led by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj and a rival administration in the east led by the self-styled Libyan National Army

chief, Gen. Khalifa Hifter. Hifter on Thursday declared a final push to take Tripoli from Sarraj's government, unleashing heavy clashes on the southern edges of the city. Sarraj's government has been backed by Italy, Turkey and Qatar, while Hifter's army has been supported by France and some key Arab countries, including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Europe postpones launch of planet mission, seeks Soyuz fix

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—European space officials on Tuesday postponed the launch of a three-year mission to study planets in other solar systems shortly before it was due to blast off. The European Space Agency announced that the launch from

Kourou, French Guiana, of the Characterising Exoplanets Satellite (CHEOPS) mission would be delayed by at least a day. It had been scheduled for 0854 GMT (3:54 a.m. EST). ESA Director of Science Guenther Hasinger tweeted that "a software error in the Fregat upper stage" of the Soyuz rocket was responsible for the postponement. "With this complex mission, we will not take any risks," he added, advising people to "keep fingers crossed for (a launch) tomorrow" at the same time. Europe's Arianespace, which has been operating Russian Soyuz rockets from Kourou since 2011, said during the countdown that "the Soyuz launcher's automated sequence was interrupted at 1 hour 25 minutes before liftoff." The launcher was put into a safe standby mode, it added.

Environment

Destruction of the forests can be swift. Regrowth is much, much slower.

But around the world, people are putting shovels to ground to help it happen.

They labor amid spectacular recent losses—the Amazon jungle and the Congo basin ablaze, smoke from Indonesian rainforests wafting over Malaysia and Singapore, fires set mostly to make way for cattle pastures and farm fields. Between 2014 and 2018, a new report says, an area the size of the United Kingdom was stripped of forest each year.

Rebuilding woodland is slow and often difficult work. And it requires patience: It can take several decades or longer for forests to regrow as viable habitats, and to absorb the same amount of carbon lost when trees are cut and burned.

And yet, there is urgency to that work—forests are one of the planet's first lines of defense against climate change, absorbing as much as a quarter of man-made carbon emissions each year.

Through photosynthesis, trees and other plants use carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to produce chemical energy to fuel their growth; oxygen is released as a byproduct. As forests have shrunk, however, so has an already overloaded Earth's capacity to cope with carbon emissions.



A reforestation assistant measures a newly planted tree in a field damaged by illegal gold mining in Madre de Dios, Peru, on March 30, 2019. After cutting and burning centuries-old trees, miners used diesel pumps to suck up deep layers of the earth, then pushed the soil through filters to separate out gold particles. To turn gold dust into nuggets, they stirred in mercury, which binds the gold together but also poisons the land.

AP

Restoring forests 1 tree at a time, to help repair climate

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP SCIENCE WRITER

Successful reforestation programs take into account native plant species. They are managed by groups with a sustained commitment to monitoring forests, not just one-off tree planting events. And usually, they economically benefit the people who live nearby—for instance, by creating jobs, or reducing erosion that damages homes or crops.

The impact could be great: A recent study in the journal *Science* projected that if 0.9 billion hectares (2.2 billion acres) of new trees were planted—around 500 billion saplings—they could absorb 205 gigatonnes (220 gigatons) of carbon once they reached maturity. The Swiss researchers estimated this would be equivalent to about two-thirds of man-made carbon emissions since the start of the Industrial Revolution.

Other scientists dispute those calculations, while some fear the theoretical promise of tree-planting as an easy solution to climate changes could distract people from the range and scope of the responses needed.

But all agree that trees matter. And in many places around the world, people are working to revive them:

■ In a region of southeastern Peru called Madre de Dios, forestry researcher Jhon Farfan

inspects lands where the forest has already been lost to illegal gold mining.

After cutting and burning centuries-old trees, miners used diesel pumps to suck up deep layers of the earth, then pushed the soil through filters to separate out gold particles. To turn gold dust into nuggets, they stirred in mercury, which binds the gold together but also poisons the land.

Left behind are patches of desert-like land—dry, sandy, stripped of topsoil and ringed by trunks of dead trees.

Last December, Farfan and other scientists with the Peru-based nonprofit CINCIA planted more than 6,000 saplings of various species native to this part of the Amazon, including the giant shihuahuaco, and tested different fertilizers. Since the project began three years ago, the team has planted more than 42 hectares (115 acres) with native seedlings, the largest reforestation effort in the Peruvian Amazon to date.

■ After miners left West Virginia's Cheat Mountain in the 1980s, there was an effort to green the coal mining sites to comply with U.S. law. The companies used heavy machinery to push upturned soil back into place, compacting the mountainside with bulldozers. The result

was soil so packed in that rainwater couldn't seep down, and tree roots couldn't expand.

Companies planted "desperation species"—grasses with shallow roots or non-native trees that could endure, but wouldn't reach their full height or restore the forest as it had been. On Cheat Mountain and at other former mining sites across Appalachia, more than a million acres of former forests are in similar arrested development.

Now Michael French, director of operations for the Kentucky-based nonprofit Green Forests Work, and his colleagues are collaborating with the U.S. Forest Service to restore native Appalachian forests and the rare species they support—by first tearing down other trees.

Green Forests Work has reforested around 800 acres within the Monongahela, and it is taking a similar approach to other former mining sites across Appalachia, having reforested around 4,500 total acres since 2009.

■ Maria Coelho da Fonseca Machado Moraes, nicknamed Dona Graça, runs a tree nursery that grows seedlings of species native to Brazil's lesser-known jungle—the Atlantic coastal rainforest.

She collaborates with a nonprofit group called

Save the Golden Lion Tamarin, which works to protect and restore the forest habitat of the endangered namesake monkey. "The Atlantic rainforest is one of the planet's most threatened biomes, more than 90% of it was deforested," said Luis Paulo Ferraz, the nonprofit's executive secretary. "What is left is very fragmented."

As she nears 50, Dona Graça says she is furious at what has happened to the forest, which was whittled down to allow for the urban expansion of Rio de Janeiro and other cities.

And so, between feeding her chickens and raking the leaves, she grows seedlings of rare species. She mixes limestone and clay, places it in plastic nursery bags and plants seeds in them. She irrigates them with water and cow urine.

Local replanting efforts — which aim to reconnect fragmented parcels of forest — often use the seedlings from Dona Graça's nursery.

She does this, she said, for posterity.

"In the future when I pass away ... that memory I tried to leave for the people is: It's worth it to plant, to build," she said.

Federica Narancio contributed to this report from Peru and West Virginia, and Yesica Fisch reported from Brazil.

Life & Style

Andrew Lloyd Webber beams as 'Cats' film has its premiere

NEW YORK (AP)—It was a special night for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber as he walked the red carpet for the world premiere of the film adaptation of his Tony Award-winning stage musical "Cats" Monday night.

Speaking exclusively to The Associated Press, the 71-year old composer called Taylor Swift "absolutely fantastic" as Bombalurina, and beamed with pride while speaking of the unusual journey his award-winning musical has taken.

"This is a most extraordinary night for me in way, because it's been nearly 40 years after it got on the stage first. And of course, when 'Cats' got onto stage, everybody thought it was the most unlikely event to really go into a theater," Lloyd Webber said.

The award-winning composer knew the idea of transforming a series of T.S. Eliot poems into a stage musical with actors playing the feline

roles seemed like an unlikely concept for a show. But something clicked for the famed composer, and the musical has become one of his most popular works, playing on stages around the world for the past 40 years.

Now, it's come to the big screen with a star-studded film that includes Swift, Jennifer Hudson, Idris Elba and Dame Judi Dench.

After posing for photographers, Lloyd Webber spoke

about the show's unusual journey, and attributed the success of the production to theater director Trevor Nunn and choreographer Gillian Lynne, saying it's what "brought though into the theater."

He feels the same way about the director of the film adaptation.

"What's interesting to me, now, in this new kind of version of it on the screen, is that this is very much Tom Hooper's 'Cats.' I mean, it's very, very dif-



AP
Executive producer/composer Andrew Lloyd Webber attends the world premiere of "Cats," at Alice Tully Hall, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019, in New York.

ferently conceived to the stage show and, of course, you would expect," Lloyd Webber said.

Tony-winning actor and talk

show host James Corden, who plays Bustopher Jones, agrees, calling the concept, "incredibly bizarre," though "incredibly unique," and said he was honored to be a part of it.

"It's a bizarre experience when someone's asking you to be a cat. But, you know, you try your best and you're surrounded by the finest group of actors you can imagine, and I just found the entire thing very creatively inspiring, I have to say," Corden said.

Lloyd Webber said he never intended to write the show "Cats," rather, he just wanted to perform an exercise by writing lyrics for a series of Eliot's poems that his mother read to him when he was a boy.

"I was about 6 years old and they stayed with me. And after I'd written 'Evita,' I really wanted to see if I could

set existing verse to music, because when I was working with Tim Rice, I tended to write music first and he would put the lyrics to my music. And I kept thinking, I'd like to see if I could write the other way around," Lloyd Webber said.

After setting four of the poems to music, he sent them to the poet's widow, Valerie, and she gave him the green light to continue.

"She said, 'Do go on and do the rest of it.' And I thought of it as a sort of companion piece to a piece I've written called 'Variations,' which had been a big hit on an album—a big, big record hit. And the idea was that they'd be like two companion dance pieces," he said.

But then she gave him something that would change his plans.

Murakami holds rare public reading to mark debut anniversary

TOKYO (AP)—A monkey that confesses he steals women's identity cards, causing them to temporarily forget who they are, starred Tuesday as author Haruki Murakami marked 40 years since his debut as a novelist with his first public reading in Japan in nearly a quarter century.

Now 70 and one of the world's most popular and acclaimed novelists, Murakami debuted with "Hear the Wind Sing" in 1979, four years after he began writing while running a jazz bar in Tokyo. His 1987 romantic novel "Norwegian Wood" was his first best seller,

establishing him as a young literary star. His latest novel, "Killing Commendatore," hit U.S. bookstores last year.

Media-shy Murakami's last public readings were in Kobe and Ashiya in



Murakami

western Japan, where he grew up, following a deadly 1995 earthquake there. On Tuesday, he was joined by award-winning young female novelist Mieko Kawakami, a longtime Murakami fan who was in the audience at both events 24 years ago before she became

a novelist.

After the two authors took turns reading passages from their works, Murakami said, "Actually, I have a brand new novel that I wrote a few weeks ago, and I

haven't even published it." He said it is called "Confessions of a Shinagawa Monkey" and is a sequel to "A Shinagawa Monkey," a story of a woman named Mizuki who forgets her name because a monkey had stolen it, published as part

of a 2002 compilation, "Five Strange Tales from Tokyo."

The new story takes place at a small Japanese hot spring hotel where a monkey appears as the protagonist takes a bath. The monkey, apparently speaking in Japanese, offers to wash his back, and explains he was raised by a professor and grew up listening to classical music such as Joseph Bruckner and Richard Strauss. The monkey faced discrimination in the conformist monkey community and ended up at the hot springs hotel where he is hired as a helper and given an attic to live in.

Mom-to-be's choice of mentor falls short on disciplining kids

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I were recently matched with a child in an adoption. I'm not experienced with children, but my neighbor "Kara" has two kids around the same age as our future son. I like Kara and really want our child and me to spend time with her family.

The problem is, my husband has forbidden our son to hang out with Kara's children because she and her husband let them run wild. They have broken things at other people's homes so often that some neighbors no longer invite the family over.

Kara and her husband are good with their children, except for enforcing discipline. I'd like to have Kara in my life and have her help me plan my toddler shower. Would it be insensitive of me to tell her how my husband feels and ask if she and her husband can take more steps to keep them under control? I feel bad shunning her without telling her why and giving her a chance to correct it. I'm also trying to think of a way to change my husband's mind.

PLANNING FOR PARENTHOOD

DEAR PLANNING: While I think your husband's reaction may be a bit extreme, if you are hoping to use Kara as a mentor in raising your future son, you should choose more carefully. This is a woman whose children are so poorly raised that neighbors refuse to have them in their homes.

Parenting is a skill that has to be learned. No one is ever totally prepared for it. Moms and dads learn on the job,

and you will, too, by spending time with other parents and reading books. As much as you like Kara, if you tell her what you have in mind, she's likely to become defensive and highly offended, and you may make an enemy.

Because neighborhood kids tend to interact with each other, I wouldn't be surprised if Kara's children manage to find their way to your place. If that happens and they act up, handle it by telling them that while it may be OK for them to behave that way in their home, it is NOT permitted in yours—and that if they come over, there are certain house rules that must be followed. It would be doing them (and Kara) a tremendous favor.

P.S. As to that toddler shower, ask some of your other friends or relatives to help with the planning. I'm sure they will be more than happy to assist.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have had the same roommate, "Milo," for four years. Two years ago, he started dating my husband's ex-girlfriend. It was no big deal, my husband was fine with it, and Milo never brings her over. In the time they've been seeing each other Milo has refused to fully commit to her. He doesn't see other people, but he doesn't call her his girlfriend.

Today my husband told me Milo won't commit to her because he thinks it would bother me if she were around our house all the time. He's right. It would. I'm not in love with the idea of my husband's drop-dead gorgeous ex hanging out at our house.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



Abby, I see in her everything I'm not. Am I being selfish? I want our roommate to be happy, and I'm not sure how to proceed. Must I just suck it up? I mean, I'm married for heaven's sake.

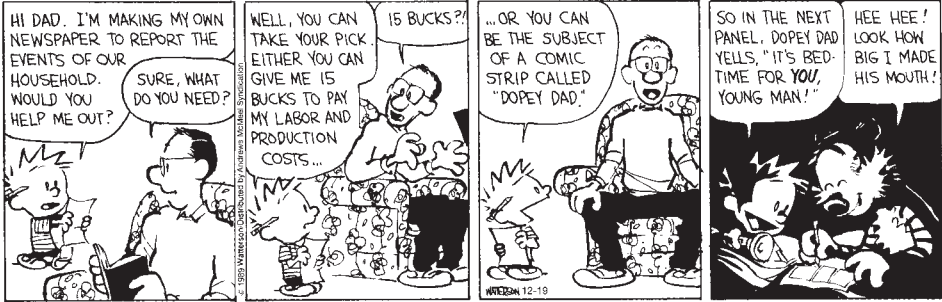
SELFISH ROOMMATE

DEAR ROOMMATE: I don't think you should acquiesce to anything that makes you uncomfortable. You're making a mistake by assuming responsibility for the fact that Milo won't commit. He's a grown man and responsible for his own choices. The current arrangement is working for all of you, and you should stay out of it.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

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By Glenn McCoy

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ACROSS

1 Mater lead-in

5 Speck

8 Wine region

12 Shake-spearean king

13 401(k) alternative

14 Clone

15 Leslie

16 Book-spine abbr.

17 Stench

18 Italian cheese

20 Colonial news-casters

22 Neither mate

23 Follower (Suff.)

24 Wine valley

27 Garbanzo bean

32 — -de-France

33 A billion years

34 Right angle

35 Color similar to avocado

DOWN

1 Pond

2 Maui

3 Crêche

4 "Break Free"

5 Person with

6 Acapulco gold

7 Body powder

8 In

9 Fragrant flower

10 Level

11 Pen fluids

19 "Monopoly" corner

21 Rock's Ocasek

24 Chill in the air

25 Pub pint

26 Veggie-based first

28 Garden tool

29 Sly suggestion

30 Shade tree

31 Jungfrau, for one

36 Circumferences

37 GPS suggestion

38 Prove false

41 Yes, to Juan

42 Sail support

43 Bassoon's kin

44 Surrealist Salvador

46 Kermit, for one

47 Waffle brand

48 Minus

51 Bankroll

Solution time: 24 mins.

C	O	I	N	A	R	C	D	E	A	L
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V	A	N	E	A	R	K	I	S	L	A
E	D	G	E	R	O	E	N	E	I	N

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marla Sokoloff, 39; Jake Gyllenhaal, 39; Alyssa Milano, 47; Tyson Beckford, 49.

Happy Birthday: Everything has a place. It's time to put things away -- to compartmentalize emotionally, mentally and physically. Prepare, and when the time comes, you'll be ready to participate. It's time to work on you, your happiness and your future. A lifestyle change will encourage you to learn something new and to take better care of your health. Your numbers are 4, 15, 22, 27, 29, 36, 47, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Too much of anything will lead to overreacting. Use intelligence to sort through concerning situations. Don't buy into what someone else wants you to do. Simply say no, and move on to what suits you best. Choose romance over discord. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A change may be right for you, but if it doesn't work for everyone else, you'll be faced with opposition. Be willing to compromise, and be ready to offer incentives that will help you get your way. Surround yourself with supportive people. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You can have fun without being extravagant. If you shop, look for bargains and choose items that you can afford. It's lovely to be generous at this time of the year, but not at the expense of added stress. Romance is featured. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Situations will get blown out of proportion. Family dynamics will leave you in a delicate position. If you overreact, you'll have regrets. Gifts

you create on a shoestring budget will be treasured by those on the receiving end. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let anger set in because time is running out. Do your best to prepare, but don't try to do the impossible. Delegate chores to others so that everyone, including you, can enjoy more quality time together. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Do something beautiful for others. Sharing will make you feel good about who you are and what you have. Refuse to let someone rain on your parade because he or she isn't as generous or kind as you. Be a good Samaritan. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Make travel plans to visit someone who stimulates your mind and encourages you to go after your goals. Learn by watching what others do and how they react. Knowledge is the route to enlightenment. A lifestyle change looks promising. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take charge and get things done. Be creative, come up with solutions and be the one to save the day. Your enthusiasm and energy will be infectious and prompt others to join in and help. You can make a difference. 4 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Touch base with someone you may not get to see before the festive break. Sharing a little cheer will lift your spirits and encourage you to make some resolutions to put into practice sooner rather than later. Gather facts, and proceed with confidence. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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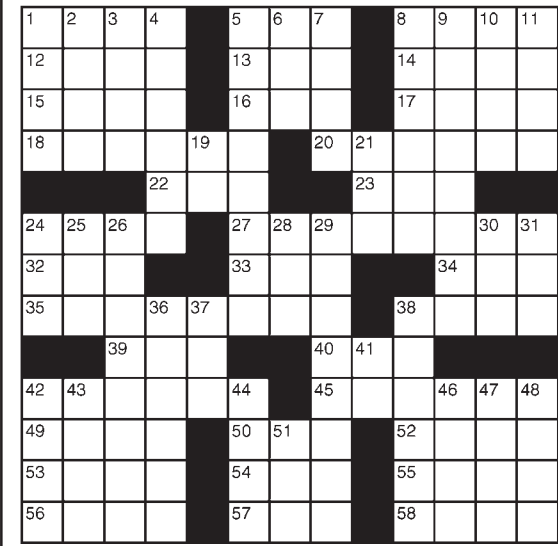
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Silence is golden. When in doubt, or if you're feeling emotionally drained, you are best to say little, listen carefully and focus on making the adjustments that will help you regain the energy required to get through the year-end festivities. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A quick change made when under stress or anger will not help you get ahead. Relax, stay calm and think matters through. Patience will lead to clarity and help you make sound decisions. Concentrate on personal improvements, not what others do. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Sign up at your local soup kitchen or volunteer to help a committee that you feel addresses your concerns. What you offer will lead to new friendships, opportunities and a change in the way you live. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are charismatic, imaginative and proactive. You are outgoing and flexible.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★

12/19

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WONDERWORD® By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

TOW TRUCKS Solution: 10 letters

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N X E C E S T S O O B A P E W
I L S H H K N K C U T S R N H
W E P T R I R D S O A B I G E
O L R U A E N A R P M L V I E
T L E H L M V E P I O A A N L
R A C D A L L E S K V G T E S
O C B A L I I R S D E E E O W
P C A O A N I E D A O L R N H
S I T R T A S W T O O L S S C
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A E E E F A P P A R A T U S U
R N R E P O S S E S S F U E L
T T Y T E F A S L O R T N O C

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Accident, Apparatus, Appointment, Axle, Battery, Boosts, Bus, Call, Chains, Charge, Clutch, Controls, Drivers, Engine, Flatbed, Fuel, Fuses, Heavy, Illegal, Kits, Load, Machines, Mats, Mechanic, Move, Overheat, Parked, Police, Power, Private, Pull, Repairs, Repossess, Road, Rotate, Safety, Stuck, Toll, Tools, Towing, Trailer, Transport, Wheels

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PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that the Board Personnel Affairs Committee will be holding a special meeting on Friday, December 20, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom located at the Airport Fire Station at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on Saipan.

AGENDA

A. PRELIMINARY MATTER:

1. Roll Call

2. Adoption of Agenda

3. Adoption of Minutes – October 31, 2019

B. Public Comment(s)

C. Special Meeting Items:

1. Employment Contract: Deputy Director

2. Employment Contract: Executive Director

D. Executive Session (if needed)

E. Adjournment

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit will be imposed for oral testimony.

Joseph M. Diaz, Chairman

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Pacers snap Lakers' road winning streak



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Malcolm Brogdon saw an opening and took it Tuesday night.

And just like that, the Los Angeles Lakers' long winning streak away from home was over.

Brogdon drove past Dwight Howard with 36.4 seconds left, scoring the tiebreaking basket on a nifty reverse layup to help the Indiana Pacers protect their home court with a 105-102 victory over the NBA's best road team.

"We knew when we threw a punch, they would punch back," Domantas Sabonis said. "We just stuck together."

Eventually, the Pacers threw enough scoring jabs to earn their fourth straight victory—perhaps their most impressive all season.

The Lakers (24-4) came into the game with the league's best record and 14 straight wins on the road, the second-longest streak in franchise history and two wins short of their record-setting mark from 1971-72.

But even LeBron James couldn't bail them out with All-Star forward Anthony Davis missing the game because of a sprained right ankle.

Yes, James scored 20 points and had nine rebounds and nine assists, but he missed a step-back 3-pointer with 11.7 seconds left that would have given the Lakers the lead. A replay review overturned a call and gave the Pacers the ball.

Sabonis then made one of two free throws to finish with 26 points and 10 rebounds.

Rajon Rondo and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope each missed a shot before time expired as the Lakers desperately tried to force overtime.

"Throughout the winning streak, we were able to keep our composure, whether we were up or down, still being able to make a game of it, which we did tonight," James said. "But sometimes the ball doesn't bounce your way."

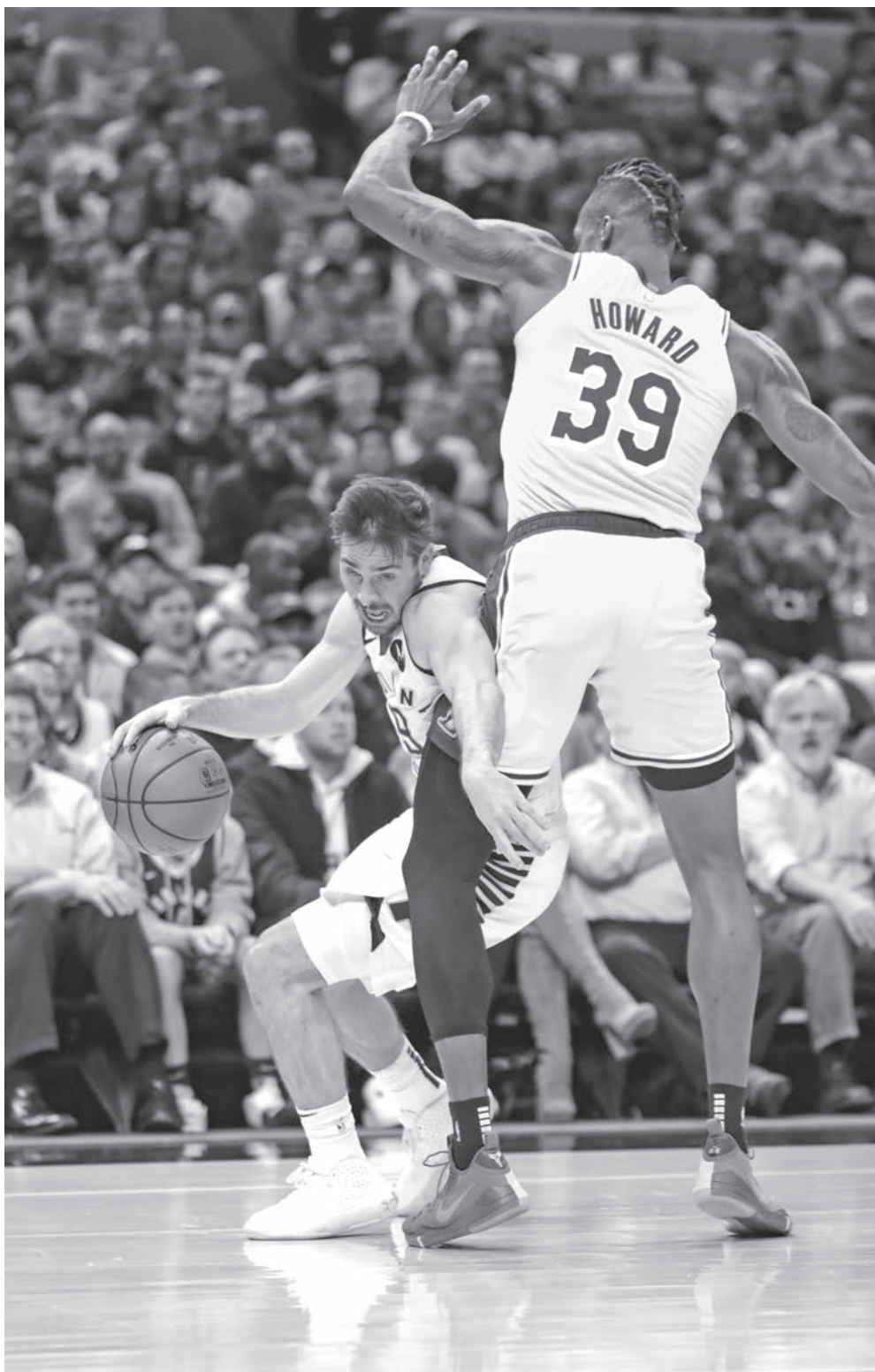
That was certainly true Tuesday.

After leading most of the first half, the Lakers trailed most of the second half until a 9-0 spurt midway through the fourth quarter turned a five-point deficit into a 95-91 lead.

It didn't last long.

Brogdon's mid-range jumper with 2:20 left tied the score at 100. Myles Turner broke the tie by making two free throws with 1:59 left.

Nineteen seconds later, James' free throws tied it up again and that's how it stayed until Brogdon took matters into his own hands and charged right past Howard and deftly used the rim to protect the ball for the basket.



Indiana Pacers guard T.J. McConnell (9) tries to go around Los Angeles Lakers center Dwight Howard (39) during the second half of an NBA game in Indianapolis, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

32-16 run that sent the Clippers into the fourth leading 90-69.

Lou Williams added 20 points for the Clippers, scoring their first 11 of the fourth—including three 3-pointers. Ivica Zubac had 12 points in helping the team win its 12th in a row over the Suns in Los Angeles.

Kelly Oubre Jr. scored 19 points and Deandre Ayton added 18 points and 12 rebounds in his return from a 25-game NBA suspension for Phoenix, which lost its fourth in a row.

Ayton played on opening night, scoring 18 points against Sacramento, and then sat out as punishment for violating the league's anti-drug program after testing positive for a diuretic. He showed little rust in notching his second double-double of the season while playing 24 minutes.

Jazz 109, Magic 102

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points, including eight as the Utah Jazz closed the game with a 19-5 run to win win over the Orlando Magic.

With the Jazz trailing 97-90, Mitchell awoke a moribund offense and energized the crowd with a highlight-reel dunk in traffic. That sparked the clinching spurt for Utah (16-11), which has won three in a row.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored nine of his 30 points during the late surge, and Joe Ingles had 16 points and 12 rebounds.

D.J. Augustin had 22 points off the bench and Evan Fournier added 19 for the Magic, who fell to 12-15.

After a 3-pointer by Ingles and a free throw by Ed Davis, the Jazz led 82-65. But the Magic mounted a quick comeback against Utah's struggling bench players.

Fournier's basket capped a 12-0 run to get the Magic to 82-77 early in the final quarter. Orlando then overcame an eight-point deficit to lead 97-90 after a 15-0 spurt powered by Augustin's seven points.

Nikola Vucevic, in his second game back after an 11-game absence, had 12 points on 4-for-15 shooting. He grabbed 11 rebounds.

Mike Conley returned for the Jazz after missing five games with a tight hamstring but left in the third quarter when the pain returned. He had seven points and six assists.

A game after hitting a season-high 17 3-pointers, the Magic missed their first 10 attempts from beyond the arc and ended up 7 for 35 from 3-point range as they seemed reticent to challenge Rudy Gobert inside.

Nets 108, Pelicans 101, OT

In New Orleans, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 31 points and Brooklyn extended the Pelicans' franchise-worst losing streak to 13 games.

Joe Harris had 24 points, including a jumper that put the Nets ahead 104-98 with 1:28 to go in the extra period. Brandon Ingram quickly responded with a 3-pointer, but the Pelicans, who shot 34%, got no closer.

The Nets have won five of seven.

Ingram had 22 points and 10 rebounds but missed 10 of his first 11 shots before scoring all but two of his points after halftime. Jrue Holiday scored 21 for the Pelicans, who missed 29 of 40 attempts from 3-point range.

Jarrett Allen had 12 points, 14 rebounds and six blocks for the Nets, including a transition dunk to tie the game at 93 in the final minute of regulation.

Hornets 110, Kings 102

In Charlotte, Malik Monk scored 14 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter, and the Hornets spoiled De'Aaron Fox's return from injury with a win over Sacramento.

Cody Zeller had 17 points and nine rebounds, and Bismack Biyombo added 10 points and 12 rebounds as the Hornets (13-17) won for the fourth time in five games.

Fox was back on the floor after missing 17 games with left ankle sprain and led the Kings (12-15) with 19 points in 30 minutes.

Monk scored eight straight points in the fourth quarter, including a pair of 3s. He went 5 of 5 from the field in the fourth and finished with a career-high 10 rebounds.

Knicks 143, Hawks 120

In New York, rookie RJ Barrett scored a career-high 27 points as the Knicks ran away from Trae Young and Atlanta.

Mitchell Robinson had a career-best 22 points along with 13 rebounds, and Marcus Morris also scored 22 for the Knicks, who have won three of four after a 10-game losing streak.

Young scored 42 points for the Hawks, who lost their fifth straight. De'Andre Hunter added 19 points.

New York went ahead by 31 on Barrett's three-point play early in the third quarter.

"We trust him with the ball in his hands and he's been making tough shots for us," Sabonis said. "He's been big for us all year."

Clippers 120, Suns 99

In Los Angeles, Paul George scored 24 points, Kawhi

Leonard added 20 and the Clippers returned home after two weeks away to beat the Phoenix Suns.

The Clippers went 4-2 on their recent road trip, matching their longest of the season. Leonard didn't play in the finale, a loss Saturday at Chi-

cago.

But he came back strong at Staples Center, teaming with Paul in a dominant third quarter that saw the Clippers stretch their lead from five points to 21 by the time it was over. The two superstars combined to score 18 points in a

KD left out of 'franchise of the decade' tribute

SAN FRANCISCO—Put yourself in the shoes of Kevin Durant, a man who helped the Golden State Warriors win back-to-back championships in 2017 and 2018 and sacrificed his Achilles in a valiant attempt to three-peat in 2019.

Now, imagine finding out that the Warriors were named the franchise of the decade by Sports Business Journal, and the team has put together a photo slideshow of the best players and memories from the 2010s.

Imagine watching said slideshow, tweeted from the official team account — and ... not seeing yourself?

Some players in that 22-photo slideshow: Anthony Morrow, Monta Ellis, Zaza Pachulia, Jarrett Jack and Eric Paschall.

Sure, Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green—the foundation of the Warriors dynasty—made cameos. But there was no sign of a No. 35.

Look: Morrow was a spot-up shooter, Ellis an exciting slasher, Pachulia and Jack valuable veteran presences and Paschall is a promising rookie. And you can't include everybody who contributed to the past decade of basketball excellence. But no KD?

Honest mistake or not?

This could simply have been a "slip"—although it's hard to ignore the Finals MVP from two of the team's three championships in this decade. Or, it is a subtle, petty jab at Durant's decision to join the Brooklyn Nets instead of re-signing with the Warriors last offseason.

The Warriors did post a follow-up collage of photos thanking their fans, which included Durant. But fans on Twitter had already taken notice.

No word, though, on whether Durant's burner account(s) made an appearance in the replies.

Ravens tie Pro Bowl record with 12 selections



NEW YORK (AP)—Twelve Baltimore Ravens, including second-year quarterback Lamar Jackson, and seven New Orleans Saints, highlighted by league-leading receiver Michael Thomas, have made the Pro Bowl.

Baltimore tied the record for Pro Bowl players set by Miami in 1973. The NFL released the rosters Tuesday night for the game in Orlando, Florida, on Jan. 26.

Joining Jackson from the Ravens, who at 12-2 have the league's best record, are tight end Mark Andrews, long snapper Morgan Cox, cornerbacks Marcus Peters and Marlon Humphrey, running back Mark Ingram, linebacker Matthew Judon, fullback Patrick Ricard, tackle Ronnie Stanley, safety Earl Thomas, kicker Justin Tucker, and guard Marshal Yanda.

"This honor is all about my teammates and our coaches, because without them, the success we've had as a team wouldn't be possible," Jackson said. "I'm also grateful for all the fans who continue to support us and who have helped make this season so special. Ultimately, it's about winning, and we still have a lot of work to do before we accomplish our biggest goals."

Thirty teams had at least one player selected and 24 clubs had multiple players chosen. The New York Giants and Miami Dolphins failed to get any Pro Bowlers. Players



AP Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson, right, is tackled by Los Angeles Rams defensive end Dante Fowler during the second half of an NFL game Monday, Nov. 25, 2019, in Los Angeles.

on the two Super Bowl teams will withdraw from the Pro Bowl and be replaced.

Twenty-five of the players selected made it for the first time, including three rookies: San Francisco defensive end Nick Bosa, Kansas City return specialist Mecole Hardman and New Orleans return specialist Deonte Harris.

The Pro Bowl coaching staffs will be from the losing teams in the AFC and NFC di-

visional playoffs with the best regular-season records.

Other AFC quarterbacks are Patrick Mahomes of Kansas City and Deshaun Watson of Houston. The NFC QBs are Drew Brees of New Orleans, Aaron Rodgers of Green Bay and Russell Wilson of Seattle.

Perhaps the most star-studded spot on offense is tight end with San Francisco's George Kittle, Philadelphia's Zach Ertz, Kansas

City's Travis Kelce and Baltimore's Andrews.

Defensive standouts include Buffalo's Tre'Davious White, who is tied for the league lead with New England's Stephon Gilmore with six interceptions. They are the top AFC cornerbacks.

NFL sacks leader Shaquil Barrett of Tampa Bay is on the NFC squad, along with perennial Pro Bowlers Aaron Donald of the Rams and Richard

Sherman of the 49ers.

"To make the Pro Bowl, it's a dream come true," Barrett said. "That's the best way I can sum it up. I dreamed of this growing up. It's a huge honor and I can only hope that I'll have more to follow."

Two other Buccaneers, wide receivers Mike Evans and Chris Godwin, were chosen.

"This is a special moment, and while I've worked hard to get to where I am in my career, I wouldn't have been able to do this without my teammates and coaches," Godwin said. "I've had the chance to play alongside some of the best in the NFL, including Mike Evans, and sharing the honor with Mike makes it even better. I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity."

Meanwhile, the always confident Chris Harris Jr. has been down on his recent play.

Like don't-consider-him-for-the-Pro-Bowl sort of down.

The Denver Broncos cornerback doesn't feel all that worthy of a spot during a season where he's constantly shadowed the opposition's top receiver all over the field. He definitely thinks there are more deserving defensive backs, including Gilmore.

That's not an easy admission for Harris, a four-time Pro Bowler filled with swagger.

"They did their thing," Harris said Tuesday.

One quick addendum from Harris: No defensive back had harder assignments week in and out than him.

"I don't think they've faced the schedule we've faced,"

said Harris, whose team's loss Sunday in Kansas City guaranteed a third consecutive losing season for the Broncos (5-9) and pushed their playoff dry spell to four years. "Other than that, all those other guys are worthy for sure."

Harris has just one interception this season -- against Tennessee on Oct. 13. He needs one more for his eighth straight season with multiple picks, which would tie the team mark held by Mike Harden (1981-88).

Maybe it's the pressure of a contract year. Maybe it's not having fellow cornerback Bryce Callahan, who's been sidelined all season. But Harris hasn't been the same.

"I had to carry a lot of the load," said Harris, whose Broncos will host Detroit (3-10-1) on Sunday. But I'm supposed to be able to handle that. Been able to handle that all along. The last couple of games, just haven't played (like) myself.

Safety Justin Simmons came to his defense.

"I wouldn't necessarily say he's had a down year," Simmons said. "Maybe statistically not as great as he would have liked, but he's been an intricate part of what we've been doing."

Broncos pass rusher Von Miller showed his emotion after the Chiefs loss by saying it "defeats my soul to go out there and play the way we play and lose the way we lose."

That's just frustration surfacing. Harris feels the same way about the extended playoff drought since the Broncos won Super Bowl 50.

Brees in vintage form as playoffs approach

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Vintage Drew Brees is back.

Or so it would seem the past two weeks, during which the Saints' 40-year-old quarterback has passed for nine touchdowns and 656 yards, setting career and single-game NFL records in the process.

His return to stellar form comes at a good time for the playoff-bound Saints.

"You're always striving because you know that the challenges continue to get greater and games become even more important. We are hitting the home stretch here where we want to be playing our best football," Brees said. "The teams that typically succeed in the playoffs and the ones that have that momentum, they are ascending into the playoffs. We want to be ascending."

Whether the Saints as a whole are ascending is up for debate. Their defense gave up 48 points in a loss to the San Francisco 49ers in Week 14. But Brees was stellar in that game, throwing for five TDs

and leading the Saints back from two scores down to take the lead in the final minute before the Niners responded by driving for a winning field goal as time expired.

On Monday night against Indianapolis, Brees was in his seventh game back from a Week 2 thumb injury that sidelined him for five games. Brees turned in a virtuoso performance of historic proportions against Indianapolis, whose fan base learned during a Super Bowl in Miami a decade ago how hard it can be to stop Brees when he gets in rhythm.

Brees set a single-game record for accuracy with 29 completions on 30 attempts (96.7 percent) for 307 yards and four touchdowns, raising his career TD passing total to 541—two ahead of previous touchdown pass record holder Peyton Manning.

"That's a blessing for him, but he's not done," Saints leading receiver Michael Thomas assured. "There is so much more that he can do.

He's an incredible leader. We just follow his lead and we follow everything that he has."

The argument could and likely will be made soon that no QB and receiver in NFL history have enjoyed better chemistry than Brees and Thomas have in 2019. With 12 catches or 128 yards and a TD against Indianapolis, Thomas has an NFL-leading 133 catches for 1,552 yards this season.

"It's just accountability," Thomas said. "Our preparation throughout the week is laser-like focus. We are trying to get better and enhance our abilities."

Thomas needs 11 catches during the Saints' final two regular-season games to break Marvin Harrison's NFL single-season record of 143 receptions with the Colts in 2002. On passes from Manning.

The Saints' passing game looks a lot more like those which ranked near the top of the NFL nearly every year that coach Sean Payton's offense has been run by Brees,

beginning in 2006. While Brees is relying heavily on Thomas, he spread completions around to eight other players on Monday night: three other receivers, two tight ends, two running backs, and utility player Taysom Hill. The pass to Hill, a reserve QB and utility player who also lines up at tight end, receiver and running back, went 28 yards for a touchdown.

The pass rush appears to be seeing the effects of season-ending injuries to starting end Marcus Davenport and starting defensive tackle Sheldon Rankins. Only three games ago in Atlanta, the Saints had nine sacks. Against Indianapolis, they had one.

The Saints (11-3), one of four teams tied for the NFC's best record, conclude their regular season with a pair of road games. The first is at Tennessee, where resurgent QB Ryan Tannehill is trying to keep the Titans (8-6) in playoff contention. New Orleans finishes the regular season at Carolina.

Internationals lacking ownership in Presidents Cup

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Ernie Els has finished second to Tiger Woods more than any other player, and he never looked more spectacular doing it than as captain in the Presidents Cup.

“OK, you got me,” Els said to him with a wry grin during the closing ceremony at Royal Melbourne.

Was it really a surprise?

Sure, the Americans were the first team to rally from a deficit on the final day to win the Presidents Cup, and it was their first in any cup since a four-point comeback in the Ryder Cup at Brookline in 1999. Some context is required. They’ve won the Ryder Cup only twice since then, and they hardly ever lose the Presidents Cup.

Even with a 10-8 lead going into singles, Els and his International team were playing against a stacked deck, as usual.

It wasn’t as bad as the time Els trailed Woods by 10 shots going into the final round at Pebble Beach in the U.S. Open. Still, it didn’t seem like a fair fight.

The Internationals had only two players among the top 20 in the world ranking. Woods’ team had 10 players from the top 20, and that didn’t even include the injured Brooks Koepka at No. 1 in the world. Two of the four wild-card selections for the Americans, including Woods, won majors this year. In the singles session, the outcome felt inevitable.

Els was gracious in defeat, and also gutted.

He had fashioned 12 players representing nine flags into a team with identity and purpose. The logo he created for the International team was a combination of shields and badges culled from history that spoke to unity and loyalty, friendship, strength and fight. And they



AP
South Africa's Ernie Els hits from the 4th tee during the opening round of the Australian Open golf tournament in Sydney, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

had a chance, which is more than they’ve had some years.

“If you compare our team on paper with other teams in other sport, you would have laughed us out of the building,” Els said. “But we gave it a hell of a go and we came mightily close to winning and upsetting one of the greatest golf teams of all time.”


But they didn’t.

And it won’t get any easier the next time. Or the time after that.

This is about more than world rankings and experience, about which team looks better on paper. Because if it were, then how to explain the Ryder Cup? Europe is strong now. It wasn’t always. It still has an 11-8-1 lead over the

United States dating to 1979, the start of the modern era.

But while the Ryder Cup is billed as a contest between the flags of two continents, it’s really between two tours.

The European Tour picks the venue (it usually goes to  these days). It has full control of all operations. Paris last year felt like a home game—the course, not just the crowd—just as Hazeltine was for the Americans.

The Presidents Cup is a match between two teams, one owner.

The PGA Tour selects the site. The PGA Tour picks the captains, though not without heavy input from all the key

people on the International side.

That magnificent logo Els created for the International team? He said it required PGA Tour approval. The support staff for the International team are PGA Tour employees, even if they hail from countries outside the U.S.

The money—the Presidents Cup sells extremely well—stays with one organization every time.

That’s not why the Americans win, and Els wasn’t suggesting that. They win because they play better golf and hole more putts. There is a comfort level at the Presidents Cup they don’t experience in the Ryder Cup.

“I know it’s a PGA Tour-

sanctioned event, OK?” Els said. “But to really be able to do what you need to do, you need to be almost a separate ... you need to be away from the PGA Tour.”

Nothing personal. He paused to pat the back of Mark Williams, who played professionally in Australia and now works as a media official for the PGA Tour. Last week, he was assigned to the International team and fit right in.

“I love these guys. They work for the tour and all that,” Els said. “But to make our own rules, to get our own choices, to do our own thing, it’s hard to explain. But we need to be separate. ... The Ryder Cup works because the Europeans do their own thing and the

U.S. do their own thing. It’s two groups that clash. We’re trying to do it under one umbrella.”

The next Presidents Cup will be at Quail Hollow Club in North Carolina, a home game for the U.S. team. And then? A group from Thailand was at Royal Melbourne last week expressing interest. The best bet is a return to Royal Montreal. Another one in Asia or the first one in a Latin America country is possible after that.

It would help if the Internationals would win. Keeping it close only does so much. If they ever do, that might only remind Els of the one problem that can’t be solved.

Where would the International team display the trophy?



PHOENIX (AP)—The first act of

Madison Bumgarner’s baseball career consisted of 11 hugely successful seasons that included three World Series titles with the San Francisco Giants.

The 30-year-old left-handed pitcher believes his second act in Arizona can be just as memorable.

The Diamondbacks finalized their \$85 million, five-year contract with the 2014 World Series MVP on Tuesday, announcing the deal and introducing their newest ace at Chase Field.

“First and foremost, winning is what the whole decision was based on,” Bumgarner said. “Being with a team, that in my mind, plays my brand of baseball. Plays the

Mad-Bum’s 2nd act with D-Backs can be as memorable as 1st

way I like to play.”

Bumgarner’s deal pays \$6 million next year, \$19 million in 2021, \$23 million in both 2022 and 2023, and \$14 million in 2024. Arizona will defer \$5 million annually from 2021 to 2023, money paid in \$5 million installments each Nov. 1 from 2025-27. He gets a hotel suite on the road, the right to block trades to five teams and four premium seats at all games.

Bumgarner said Arizona was his “No. 1 place” when he talked with his agent about potential new destinations and said he “definitely left some money on the table” to come to the Diamondbacks. The North Carolina native said he’s always enjoyed Arizona during spring training when

he was with the Giants, and would usually rent a place in the Phoenix area where he could bring his family.

Now he’s looking forward to it being his second home.

The move was announced two days after the sides reached an agreement pending a successful physical. It’s a marquee addition for GM Mike Hazen, who adds the lefty to a rotation that also could include Robbie Ray, Zac Gallen, Mike Leake, Merrill Kelly or Alex Young.

Hazen said the team didn’t start the offseason targeting Bumgarner, but once talks started it became an obvious fit.

“His presence, his leadership, certainly his track record,” Hazen said. “All the

things we’ve watched from across the field with the success he’s had with the San Francisco Giants, we felt this was a big add for us.”

It is an intriguing decision for the D-backs, who don’t neatly fit into the category of a small-market or large-market team. They’ve occasionally made splashes in free agency—like when they signed Zack Greinke to a \$206.5 million, six-year deal ahead of the 2016 season -- but usually are content to have a payroll in the middle of the MLB pack.

Arizona finished 85-77 last season after trading Greinke to Houston in July. Now the D-backs are trying to build a roster that can catch the Los Angeles Dodgers, who won 106

games last season to earn their seventh straight NL West title.

If the D-backs can reach the postseason, Bumgarner’s presence could prove invaluable. He’s best known for his postseason performance—he is 4-0 with a memorable Game 7 save and an 0.25 ERA in World Series play, and has pitched two shutouts in NL wild-card games.

Bumgarner matched his career high with the 34 starts this year, moving past two frustrating, injury-shortened seasons. He won 119 games and has a 3.13 career ERA with the Giants and said he loved his time in the Bay Area, thanking the fans for their support for more than a decade.

During his tenure, the Giants won the World Series

in 2010, ‘12 and ‘14. While Arizona forfeits its second-highest draft pick, currently No. 34, San Francisco gains an extra pick, roughly No. 70, as compensation.

“We thank Madison for all that he has given to the Giants and the Bay Area community and we are deeply grateful for the success, excitement and memories he created over a remarkable 11-year period in a Giants uniform,” the team said in a statement.

The four-time All-Star missed nearly three months in 2017 after an April dirt bike accident during an off day in Colorado. Then Bumgarner broke the pinkie on his pitching hand when he was hit by a line drive in his final 2018 spring training start, undergoing surgery to insert pins into the finger.

Pacific Marine downs PPG Paint

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

Pacific Marine rallied in the fourth quarter to top PPG Paint, 59-44, in the Masters Division game in the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

After playing catch up in the majority of the game, Pacific Marine completed the comeback in the fourth period as it scored 24 points—the squad's best output in a quarter—to

end up with a double-digit winning margin.

Marino Atinen and John Flores teamed up in Pacific Marine's surge after scoring 7 points each in the fourth frame, while three of their teammates also made baskets in the final canto to steal the win from PPG Paint.

PPG Paint, which went up by as many as 8 points in the first half and clung to a 36-35 lead after three quarters, was held to three field goals and 8 markers in the fourth-quarter collapse. Only Joseph

Galulu posted more than 2 markers for PPG Paint with his one field goal and two free throws, while Orly Ebuén and Nelson Samson registered the two other baskets for the losing team in the final canto.

PPG Paint, before falling apart in the fourth period, led by 8 at the end of the first, 18-10, behind the combined 10 points of Jess Montoya and Robert Sanciango. The squad then kept the upper hand in the first half, 23-20,

despite making only 5 points in the second quarter.

Then in the third period, PPG Paint's lead was brought

down to a hair when Atinen made up for his scoreless performance in the second period after firing 8 markers in the

penultimate frame. Atinen went on to continue having a better offensive showing in the second half, as he partnered with Flores in bringing Pacific Marine back into the game and completing the comeback win.

Atinen finished with a game-high 17 points, while Flores also had double figures after logging 11 points. No PPG Paint players scored in twin digits with Galulu making only 9 markers.

Pacific Marine 59—Atinen 17, Flores 11, Guillas 7, Isip 6, Guinto 4, Genizal 4, Manangan 3, Ducusin 2, Calunzag 1.

PPG Paint 44—Galulu 9, Ebuén 7, Montoya 6, Salazar 6, Samson 4, Alano 4, Sanciango 4, Atang 2, Abadilla 2.

Scoring by quarters: 10-18, 20-23, 35-36, 59-44.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League commissioner Lito Espino, right, presents the Forex Best Player of the Game award to Pacific Marine's Marino Atinen after leading his team to a 59-44 victory against PPG Paint last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



TENORIO

From Page 28

wich, Wentworth, Michelle and GNCA runner-up Saint Joseph's. Tenorio also produced game-winning goals for the Rams five times.

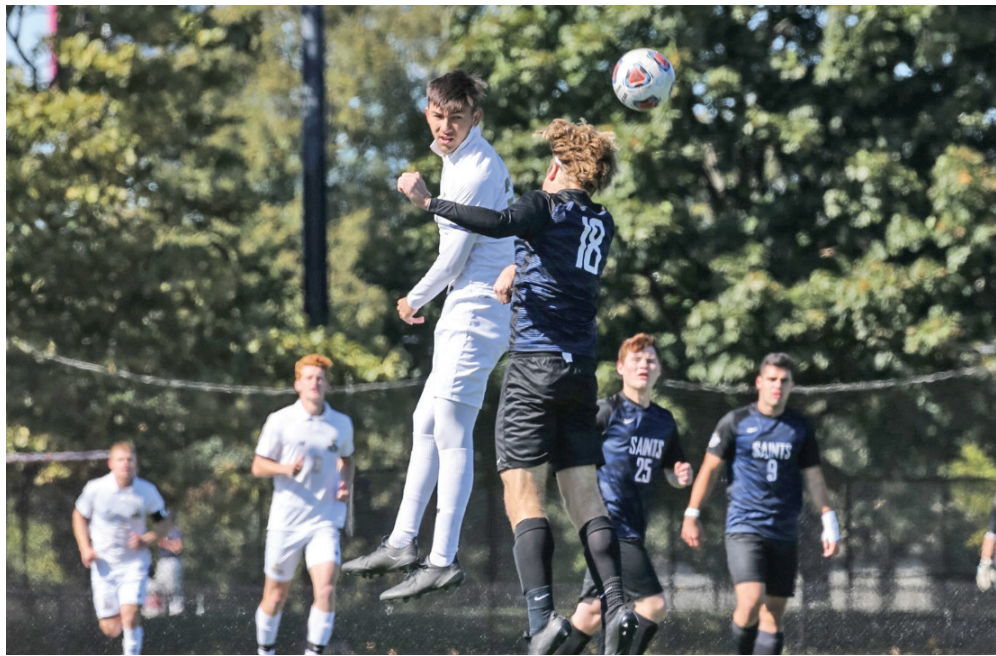
The Marianas High School graduate missed Suffolk's last match of the season against Rivier, as he had to travel to Cambodia to play for the CNMI Men's U19 National Team in the Asian Football Confederation U19

Championship 2020 Group G Qualifier held in Phnom Penh. Tenorio went on to score two goals for the Teen Ayuyis in their first game in the qualifier, as they gave Brunei quite a scare before the kingdom eked out a 4-3 win.

Tenorio was among the seven freshmen on the Rams roster, which also includes fellow CNMI national team player Dai Podziewski. The 19-year-old forward, who defeated eight senior Suffolk players and a handful of juniors for

the MVP plum, said the pair of awards will serve as motivation for him to play even better next season.

"It was very motivating to me knowing that I could win those awards even at the collegiate level because it showed me that I do have a potential. These awards will only make me work harder to get farther in this sport," said the son of Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio and former Marianas Visitors Authority managing director



SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Suffolk University's Sunjoon Tenorio, left, battles an Emmanuel College player for a header during their game in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference in October in Boston.

MHS

From Page 28

ketball League.

The Lady Dolphins are undefeated so far this season, holding a 10-0 record after notching a pair of wins last week (Dec. 10) in the final playing day in the league that is on break for nearly a month. MHS Varsity got win No. 9 after crushing Agape Christian School, 30-5, in the first game on the north court. In the second game, the Lady Dolphins also whipped Kagman High School, 20-6, to extend their winning streak and keep the lead in the regular season.

Saipan Southern, on the other hand, played only one game last week and eased past Grace Christian Academy, 23-10, for

an 8-2 mark and the second place in the team standings.

The Top 2 teams, after the regular season, will be paired against lowly-ranked squads in the opener of the double-elimination playoffs. If Tinian and Rota join next month's playoff round, nine teams will be competing and the likely No. 1 seed MHS Varsity will face the winner in the game between the No. 8 and 9 squads, while Saipan Southern will be pitted against the No. 7 team.

There is one more playing day (Jan. 7 make-up) in the regular season and pending results of the last set of matches, Agape (6-5) are behind MHS Varsity and Saipan Southern, and is followed by MHS Junior Varsity (5-5), Mt. Carmel School (5-5), GCA (2-9), and Kagman (0-10).

Agape is in third place, as it managed to get a win last week after outclassing Mt. Carmel, 19-10. MHS JV denied Agape another victory after pulling off a 14-13 upset, and the Lady Dolphins made it two in a row following a 24-14 triumph over GCA.

Meanwhile, the make-up day on Jan. 7 will feature six matches. On the north court, Saipan Southern will take on MHS Varsity and Mt. Carmel, while GCA will battle Agape. On the south end, MHS JV will face Kagman twice, while MHS Varsity will close out against Mt. Carmel.

The playoff round is tentatively set for Jan. 10 and 11 with Rota and Tinian, if they make the trip to Saipan, getting the middle seeds.

23M Tokyo Olympics tickets requested

TOKYO (AP)—Tokyo's Olympic tickets continue to be very hard to find—particularly in Japan.

Organizers on Wednesday said there were 23 million tickets requested in the latest lottery for Japan residents only. The bad news is that only 1 million tickets were available. Which means that almost everybody went away empty handed.

Next summer's Olympics have generated unprecedented demand. Organizers said 3.57 million tickets had been awarded to Japan residents in previous lotteries. Organizers

confirmed for the first time the demand was almost 20 times over supply—about 60 million tickets requested.

And now Japan residents are running out of chances.

The next ticket offering in Japan will be early next year, but will be open to Japan and non-Japan residents on a first-come, first-served basis.

Overall, organizers say about 7.8 million tickets are available for all events. Organizers have said that at least 70% of the tickets will go to Japan residents. Large blocks also

go to sponsors, international sports federations, national Olympic committees, and the International Olympic Committee.

Millions are also sold outside Japan by official Olympic tickets resellers, which can charge a 20% handling fee on every ticket. They can also take advantage of fluctuations in currency exchange rates.

The lucky—and unlucky—were quickly vocal in Japan on social media.

"It's like a dream," said one.

"What did I do wrong? This is unforgivable," said another.



AP

In this Dec. 15, 2019, file photo, the Olympic rings stand near the new National Stadium in Tokyo. The stadium is officially completed. Tokyo's Olympic tickets continue to be very hard to find, particularly in Japan. Organizers on Wednesday, Dec. 18, said there were 23 million tickets requested in the latest lottery for Japan residents only. The bad news is that only 1 million tickets were available which means most came away empty handed.



**Pacers snap
Lakers' road
winning
streak**

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune Sports

**Ravens tie
Pro Bowl
record with 12
selections**

PAGE 25



28 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY PHOTO
Suffolk University's Sunjoon Tenorio takes a shot during their game against Emmanuel College in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference in October in Boston.

Tenorio stands out

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

CNMI National Team member Sunjoon Tenorio capped his outstanding freshman season with Suffolk University by winning two coveted awards—the Rams' Rookie of the Year and Team MVP honors.

Tenorio, who suited up for the Commonwealth's men's and youth squads for several years before moving up to the collegiate level, led Suffolk in goals scored (10) in his rookie season with the National Col-



legiate Athletics Association-Division III school. He was also the first Suffolk player to have earned three straight Rookie of the Week awards from the Great Northeast Athletic Conference.

"I am very proud and hap-

py that I won those awards. Although they are individual awards, I could not have shined the way I did without the help of my teammates. It is because of them that I looked as good as I did," the prized rookie said.

Tenorio played in 15 out of the Rams' 16 matches and was a starter in 12. He made it to the board in eight matches, showing his best game on Oct. 12 against Regis after delivering the pair of goals in their 2-1 victory. The former MP United Football Club standout also tallied two goals in their 6-2 triumph over Anna Maria and had one each against Lesley, Albertus Magnus, Nor-

See TENORIO on Page 27

MHS Varsity, SSHS lock up Top 2 seeds

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER



Marianas High School Varsity and Saipan Southern High School are assured of the Top 2 seeds in the playoff round of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League.

See MHS on Page 27

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
A Marianas High School Varsity player, right, is fouled by a Grace Christian Academy defender during an earlier game in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League at the MHS Gymnasium.

